

# The Economic Trinity: Communion with the Triune God in a Market Economy

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## Recommended Citation

Butner, David Glenn Jr., "The Economic Trinity: Communion with the Triune God in a Market Economy" (2016). *Dissertations (2009 -)*. Paper 612.  
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THE ECONOMIC TRINITY: COMMUNION WITH THE TRIUNE  
GOD IN A MARKET ECONOMY

by

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A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School, Marquette University, in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

May 2016



ABSTRACT  
THE ECONOMIC TRINITY: COMMUNION WITH THE TRIUNE GOD  
IN A MARKET ECONOMY

D. Glenn Butner, Jr.

Marquette University, 2016

Many theological approaches to economics claim that the market economy can help develop an economic agent in virtue, while others argue that market economies undermine virtue, impede authentic spirituality, or result in injustice. Similarly, experimental and behavioral economists have identified market constructions that influence economic agents in terms of their motivations, perceptions, actions, and self-understanding in positive or negative ways. This dissertation theologically analyzes these two bodies of literature under the conviction that any redemptively significant development that an economic agent undergoes in the economy must be attributed to God's grace.

This project develops a Reformed and trinitarian theology of divine action by drawing on a non-contrastive account of transcendence as the basis for developing an account of human actions as concurrent with divine acts. A theology of common grace allows social actions within the marketplace to be identified as grace even when the economic agents who contribute to and participate in these social interactions may not be believers. An account of appropriations allows aspects of common grace to be distinctively attributed to the work of the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit without jeopardizing the divine oneness. The claim that all divine actions supervene upon created realities calls for the identification of immanent terms for the distinctive works of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Drawing on the theology of Kevin Hector as developed in dialogue with Charles Taylor, Cornelius Castoriadis, and Edward Rommen, this project describes the Father working through social imaginaries, the Son through identity, and the Holy Spirit through norms.

The dissertation subsequently explores how various market constructions may impede or enhance redemptively significant transformation by addressing the way these constructions influence social imaginaries, identity, or norms. Models are the key economic focal point because models are the means by which markets are constructed. As mathematical language, they are most prone to shape social imaginaries. Deficiencies in many models and their consequences are explored, with constructive solutions offered. When models undermine redemptively significant transformation, the project explains how the immanent term relates to the work of redemption in revelation, justification, and sanctification to illuminate the problem.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

D. Glenn Butner, Jr.

After completing my master's degree, I was jaded and ready to abandon my plans to pursue an academic career. It was only with my wife Lydia's encouragement and support that I decided in due time to pursue my doctoral degree, so I can say with complete honesty that this dissertation would not exist in any form without her. Any acknowledgements must therefore first and foremost point to her as a major reason why this work was possible. Of course, her support during the process of completing my degree was no less formidable. From the day I enrolled at Marquette, when she began delaying her own career so that I could pursue mine, to the final weeks when I completed editing my dissertation and she assumed some of my parenting responsibilities, she sacrificed in countless ways to ensure that I would be able to write this dissertation. Above all others, she made this work possible. I appreciate her love, support, generosity, honesty, and accountability throughout my time at Marquette.

A dissertation's director and readers inevitably influence the final shape of the work, but this is perhaps especially the case for mine. I am particularly grateful to Steve Long for his support during my time at Marquette, for guiding me through directed readings in theology and economics, for providing me with teaching and writing opportunities relating to my specialization, and for remaining the director of my dissertation, even when so many factors would have made it far easier for him to move on to greener pastures. I came to Marquette in large part because Steve Long was the first

theologian I read who compellingly navigated both economics and theology with clarity, sophistication, and genuine insight. Even as I have come to discover other authors with this rare combination of abilities, his work still stands apart. While I have no doubt that many aspects of this work will seem very different from Steve's own writing in theology and economics, I hope it is clear how much its basic contours follow his lead. When I reject a strong fact/value distinction, engage the theological assumptions of economists, question instrumental logic, or strive to move beyond the doctrines of sin and creation in a positive evaluating of the market, I do so under the influence of Steve Long.

I am also grateful for the contributions of each of the other readers of this project, and I eagerly await their comments and criticism. Fr. Robert Doran has been quite generous to me throughout my time at Marquette and has been willing on more than one occasion to take on increased responsibilities for the project when it seemed that Steve Long's role would need to change. This has saved me from great distress, and I am truly thankful. I had already reached the conclusion that there was a correlation between created realities pertaining to redemption and the divine persons themselves and that this must be the basis for a theology of economics and history when I first read *The Trinity in History*, so I was both relieved and dismayed to see Fr. Doran had already reached similar conclusions to my own – relieved because I now had more reason to trust my insights, but dismayed because his argument has reached a point of technical precision and clarity in the context of Roman Catholic theology and the thought of Bernard Lonergan that my own work in the context of the Reformed theology will likely never obtain. Still, I hope he sees a shadow of himself in the pages that follow.

I am also very thankful for the opportunities I have had to work with the other two readers for my dissertation while at Marquette. I asked Marcus Plested to serve as reader partly out of my respect for his work and the breadth of his knowledge, and partly out of the conviction that certain Orthodox sensibilities beautifully illuminate the themes I am attempting to draw from Reformed Theology. I hope the several key junctures at which Orthodox theology is influential are clear, and I look forward to hearing where I might be able to make these connections stronger. I am truly grateful for his contribution. For several years now, John Davis has humored a theology graduate student's forays into economic theory. His influence is a key factor in many of the improvements I have made in economic knowledge while at Marquette, and I am thankful for his willingness to cross disciplinary boundaries.

Throughout my time writing I received feedback and assistance from a wide range of people. Gene Schlesinger and Ryan Hemmer provided helpful comments on part of chapter 2. During early stages of the project Kirsten Guidero provided a helpful reading list. Myk Habets sent a similar list on third article theology that was particularly helpful for chapter 6. Jordan Ballor and Dylan Pahman both shared articles that allowed me to refine my thinking on important points. At Steve Long's request, Daniel Bell offered comments on chapter 3, which ultimately resulted in a more nuanced introduction to the ideas of orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy. I received feedback on parts of this project at the Henry Center at Calvin College's biennial symposium on religion and public life. Each of these contributions helped to improve the quality of what I have written. Any success found in the following pages is therefore a possible partly under the influence of numerous friends and colleagues. Any shortcomings are fully my own.





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## INTRODUCTION

In a fascinating study, economists found participants from fifteen small-scale societies for a series of experimental economic games designed to test fairness, cooperation, and altruism. The study was a first of its kind because most cross-cultural economic experiments use university students who largely come from industrialized large-scale societies with similar economies. In contrast, participants in this experiment came from societies with a range of economic development. Some participants came from foraging societies that rarely traded with anyone outside of the family, while others participated in a significant degree of regional exchange as part of growing agricultural societies. Each game was designed to allow a participant to distribute money using various mechanisms to the various players of the game. What is striking about the set of experiments is that researchers found that in some societies participants distributed the money almost equally, while in others participants were much more likely to keep a significantly larger portion of the money for themselves. These differences were found to correlate with the economic and social interactions participants faced in daily life. In societies where interaction with others through a market is frequent and culturally reinforced by standards of fairness, distribution was likely to be fair. In cultures where there is limited economic exchange and/or few cultural norms enforcing fairness in such exchanges, distribution was far less equitable. The economists conclude: “economic choices... are shaped by the economic and social interactions of everyday life.” Simply

put, some economies and societies mold individuals to be more just, and others apparently do not.<sup>1</sup>

How can we make sense of these differences theologically? Throughout history, Christians have lived in a wide range of societies, influenced by a wide range of cultural values, and exchanging within a wide variety of economies. Presumably, Christians in different economies would be more or less likely to develop fair patterns of exchange and altruistic behaviors, at least if the findings of this study can extend across time. What is most puzzling is the question of how these differences in economy relate to the work of God. After all, theologically we must speak of any growth in holiness, indeed any redemptively significant<sup>2</sup> growth at all, as the gracious work of God.<sup>3</sup> How do changes in the economy with redemptively significant results relate to the work of the Father, Son, and Spirit?

Perhaps the matter can be put another way if we start with a theological question: What does it mean for a person to daily be transformed and sanctified toward the end of participating in the communion of the Father, Son, and Spirit in a world where that person's daily life primarily consists of participation in a market economy? Such gracious participation in the divine life is, after all, part of what is made available through the redemption made possible by Jesus Christ. In him, we are becoming "partakers of the

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Henrich et al., "In Search of *Homo Economicus*: Behavioral Experiments in Fifteen Small Scale Societies," *American Economic Review*, 91.2 (May 2001), 73-8.

<sup>2</sup> I will define this term in chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>3</sup> This has been recognized at least since the debates between Pelagius and Augustine, where the latter concluded "Wherever and whenever [Christians] realize perfection... it cannot be realized except by 'the grace of God, by Jesus Christ our Lord.'" Augustine of Hippo, *On Nature and Grace*, in *Saint Augustine: Four Anti-Pelagian Writings*, trans. John A. Mourant and William J. Collinge (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992), §68.

divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4)<sup>4</sup> such that we “share in his holiness” (Heb. 12:2) and may become one in love as the Father, Son, and Spirit are one in their love of one another (John 17:20-23). Our current participation in the life of God is itself an anticipation of that last day, when not only will we “see him [Christ] as he is” (1 John 3:2), but we also will see the Father face to face (Rev. 22:3-4), something the Scriptures repeatedly affirm is impossible in this current life (Ex. 33:20, 1 Tim. 6:16).

While Christians share the hope of a participation in the divine nature, holiness, and love, it is often unclear how to be a participant in these realities today while also participating in a market economy. What do such theological statements have to do with our labor or our choice of occupation, with our financial investments, savings accounts, or credit card debt, with the way that we manage and evaluate our employees, or even with our purchasing decisions at the mall or at the nearest Wal-Mart? Many recognize that each of these human endeavors is laden with certain moral obligations prohibiting laziness and dishonesty in the workplace, fraudulent financial practices, or exploitative management techniques. Most Christians could easily list a number of moral strictures to be observed in the marketplace, but one must wonder whether such moral parameters are the best way that Christian faith relates to what is for the average citizen in the “developed nations” the primary space within which we dedicate our time: the market. Do our daily interactions in the market as consumers and producers, investors and debtors have any direct bearing on our participation in God’s redeeming work in drawing us into ever increasing participation in the divine life?

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<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all scripture citations are taken from the English Standard Version.

A number of verses clearly suggest that God does work through the market to facilitate increasing participation in the divine life. At present I will only focus on Romans 8:28, which reads, “and we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” Extant manuscripts of the verse provide some textual variation so that “God” is sometimes included as the one who acts – “God works all things for the good.”<sup>5</sup> “In all things” (*panta*) can therefore be taken as the direct object of the verb, which would render the verse to mean that God causes all things to work toward the benefit of those who believe, or as an accusative of respect indicating the sphere in which God is active.<sup>6</sup> The second option is preferable given that “works together” (*sunergei*) does not typically take a direct object and given the possibility of an echo to Genesis 50:20’s “you meant evil against me, but God meant it for God,”<sup>7</sup> though there are lingering objections.<sup>8</sup> Taking the dative for “those called” (*tois klētois*) to be an instrumental dative, the verse could be loosely translated as follows: “And we know that for those who love God, God works in all spheres for good with those who are called according to his purpose.” The verse suggests that God works through all spheres, which would include the market, partly by using economic agents themselves.

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<sup>5</sup> With or without this addition, God is the more likely candidate for the subject of the verb than the Holy Spirit. Moo points out that the subject of the verbs in 8:29-30 is clearly “God” and not “the Spirit” as in 8:26-7, suggesting that Paul has moved on from his prior pneumatological focus. Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 528.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 528.

<sup>7</sup> Colin G. Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2012), 354.

<sup>8</sup> Cranfield suggests that MSS including God as the subject are likely later interpolations, which points in the direction of “all things” being the subject of the verb rather than an accusative of respect, which would leave an ambiguous subject. C.E.B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1985), 204.

It is somewhat unusual for Paul to refer to Christians as “those who love God,”<sup>9</sup> but in this instance his choice of words may be intentional, echoing his teaching in Romans 5:5 that our love derives from the fact that “God’s love has been poured in our hearts through the Holy Spirit.”<sup>10</sup> There is a “divine-human synergism,” to use the words of Robert Jewett, between God and those who love him in all spheres (I will eventually need to develop more precise language here).<sup>11</sup> Those who love God are the beneficiaries of a providential care active in all areas of life to bring about the good, which ultimately refers to the final communion of God and humanity. The particular activity of this grace is somehow connected with the saving grace wrought in the hearts of those who love God through the outpouring of the Spirit. In this way, it seems that God is actively at work in all things – society, history, and economy included – to bring about redemption (and other goods), though precisely how this is brought about is not fully clear.

If we grant that God is at work through human society, through history, and through economic exchanges, we immediately face a number of additional questions. Is God acting in all societies and all economies equally? If not, in which societies and economies is God more active? And, furthermore, if God is not equally active in all societies and economies, on what grounds do we posit that God is more active in one place rather than in another? The risks of such a line of questioning are quite clear to those with any knowledge of recent history. When a particular society proclaims itself the chosen object of a special divine favor, assuming for itself the supercessionist pretension

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<sup>9</sup> C.K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: A&C Black, 1951), 159. Such an interpretation is often ruled out as resulting in an unlikely optimism of a natural tendency of all things to lead to moral progress apart from the agency of God. cf. Robert Jewett, *Romans* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2007), 526.

<sup>10</sup> Jewett, *Romans*, 526; Kruse, *Romans*, 355.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 527.



of supplanting Israel as the elect nation of God or of supplanting the Church as the primary venue through which God is currently at work to redeem the world, the resulting political and economic conceptions are far more likely to legitimize genocide, war, terrorism, exploitation, slavery, or any number of other blatant examples of disregard for the divine commandments to love God and neighbor than they are to result in any legitimate identification of such divine favor. Our course will not be toward any such attempt at identifying divine favor with a particular nation or any particular system of political economy.

Nevertheless, if God is said to be active indiscriminately through all economic exchanges or through all formations of social-historical reality, one immediately wonders how, on the one hand, such uniform divine action could be anything other than an interesting piece of trivia, while on the other hand how it might be possible to identify any sort of political, economic, or social sin. If God works through all economic exchanges equally, that is equally through chattel slavery, cottage industry, capitalist multi-national corporations, and communist nation-states, such equivalent divine agency would be irrelevant as a guide to our human efforts in building a society or in better serving God within any society. God could be said to be at work identically through any social-historical formation such that the economic and political particulars of our societies would be inconsequential to the ultimate divine purposes for creation. Similarly, if we were to suppose that God worked uniformly through economic exploitation and through just economic interactions, we would presumably have no grounds for condemning the former or preferring the latter. Insofar as we identified divine action and goodness, both would simply be in full accordance with our conception of the good,

whether we articulated this in terms of the divine commands or in respect to divine efforts at building virtue. No, there must be some means of suggesting that particular social-historical developments participate more fully in the life of God, and that participating in any and all forms of economy is not coterminous with participating in the life of God.

This is where a second scriptural insight can raise a second line of enquiry to balance our first series of considerations. In 1 Thessalonians 5:19, Paul writes that the church in Thessalonica should “not quench the Spirit.” In its brevity, the phrase seems innocuous enough. Given the context of the warning to not despise prophecies in 5:20, the passage is often taken to prohibit the silencing of the charism of prophecy.<sup>12</sup> Under such readings, quenching the Spirit occurs when a prophet refuses to share a prophecy, or when a community silences a prophet’s message.<sup>13</sup> However, Paul might actually have in mind the fruits of the Spirit in general<sup>14</sup> or all of the “extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit,” including not only prophecy but tongues and other miraculous gifts.<sup>15</sup> The possibility of extending Paul’s exhortation to all such cases makes Paul’s brief paraenetic phrase all the more fascinating. As Ben Witherington summarizes, “Paul’s exhortation presupposes that it is possible to stifle the utterances of the Spirit.”<sup>16</sup> When we think of

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<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 219.

<sup>13</sup> See F.F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1982), 125; Paul-Gerhard Müller, *Der Erste und Zweite Brief an die Thessalonicher* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2001), 209.

<sup>14</sup> Earl J. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 279.

<sup>15</sup> Friedrich Lang, σβεννυμι, in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. VII*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1971), 168.

<sup>16</sup> Ben Witherington, III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 168.

this presupposition in terms of prophecy alone, it is easy enough to acknowledge that prophets have been silenced throughout history and to move on, but when we consider the possibility that Paul might presuppose a human capacity to in some way quench the fruits of the Spirit or the miraculous spiritual gifts, perhaps even to resist the Spirit's role in sanctification, the significance of the assumption that the Spirit can be resisted are much more obvious. This is true even if we decide on exegetical grounds that Paul is indeed only speaking of prophecy. The exegetical question causes the reader to pause long enough to recognize that it is a significant thing indeed to suggest that human beings have the ability to silence prophets, the mouthpieces of the omnipotent God.

There is a possible temptation here to redirect the matter of a human capacity to quench the Spirit to the domain of soteriology in such a way that discussion degenerates into a dispute over the Reformed doctrine of irresistible grace. That will not be the approach of this book. Even the measured analysis of John Calvin himself suggests that there is something more to the idea of a human capacity to resist the Spirit than soteriological questions, as important as they may be. Calvin understands the phrase "quenching the Spirit" to indicate more than simply rejecting prophecy. There is rather a relationship of general to particular. "Those also quench the Spirit whose laziness renders void the gift of God, when they should fan more vigorously the sparks which God has kindled in them by daily progress." He immediately rules out any suggestion that this places the onus of salvation on human effort, for "God works efficaciously in His elect," but he affirms that humans can "brush aside so precious a gift of God, or close their eyes

and allow themselves to be dragged into the vainglory of the world” in a way that is still compatible with the claim that God is the author of faith, regeneration, and salvation.<sup>17</sup>

While such a brief Scriptural citation alone is insufficient to develop any full-fledged theory of how human beings might resist the divine will, it is enough to establish a second line of enquiry that will occupy the rest of this study. I will suggest that, while God is active in all things, including the economy, to fulfill His purposes, human beings have the ability to resist such divine activity in the world through particular aspects of society and economy. This ability makes it possible to identify particular aspects of the economy which might impede our cooperation with God’s action without requiring that we endorse any particular political or economic system, any nation-state or nationality, or any theory of political economy as the beneficiary of a special divine favor through which God is working to bring about salvation. This is to say that sidestepping the legitimizing risks discussed above requires sidestepping questions of macroeconomic theory, that is, questions of the nature of economic systems as whole. Though I will at times gesture toward how our contemporary capitalist economy may fit within the theological account I am developing, this should not be taken to mean that other economic systems cannot be constructed such that they are either more or less in line with divine intentions. The possibility of resisting the divine action must instead be considered in the context of microeconomic theory, which is to say in the context of the economic actions of single economic agents (consumers, firms, investors, etc.). This is not to rule out the possibility of a nation as a whole “quenching the Spirit’s fire,” but merely a move that recognizes the human capacity to resist divine action can be manifest

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<sup>17</sup> John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians*, trans. Ross MacKensie, eds. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1960), 376.

in individual actions in any given society. Such resistance is what allows an observer to find some economic actions better than others. It also renders the claim that God acts through the economy meaningful insofar as different formulations of the economy can open themselves to this divine action in varying degrees.

Given the possibility that God works in all things for the good of those who love Him, including in the economy, but that humans may also resist this divine action by participating in economic interactions that quench the Spirit's fire – for it indeed remains only an unsubstantiated possibility after such brief and limited exegesis – the scope of research for this study comes into focus. I will begin by surveying existing theological analysis of economics to discern whether there is any reason to suspect either that God is at work through the economy toward the fulfillment of the divine plan or that human beings are able to resist this divine activity through particular aspects of the economy. Chapter 1 will therefore establish that there is indeed good reason to suspect that God works through the economy and that human beings can resist God in the economic domain. I will show that theologians have accused various aspects of the economy of distorting human nature in a wide variety of ways. I will also argue that recent developments in philosophy of economics and economic methodology warrant such theological consideration precisely because there can be no pure economic fact entirely divorced from values, metaphysical commitments, and even theological implications. Simply put, economics cannot be a pure positive science, so from a Christian standpoint there must be a theology of economics. There is therefore a need to try to make sense of the various theological approaches to the economy, and to apply insights from the various approaches to economic models.

Once we have some sense of the various influences of the economy on the human formation that are analyzed by theologians, chapter 2 will proceed to develop the metaphysical and theological framework within which these influences can be analyzed. Metaphysically, the basic question of the God-world relation must be developed in such a way that it is possible, first, to see a purportedly secular or natural space such as the economy as properly and necessarily oriented toward communion with God, and second, so that it is intelligible to speak about God *acting* within the market toward the fulfillment of this God-ward orientation. This will require developing a theory of the God-world relation that allows for both divine and human agency. Here I will begin consciously embedding my project in Reformed theology, something I consider an important methodological decision. Attempting to remain within a given tradition will reduce the risk that my economic or philosophical tendencies may distort my theology. Therefore I will endeavor at every stage of the argument to highlight where my claims fit within the Reformed tradition and conform to scriptural teachings.

In chapter 2, this means that I will develop a non-contrastive account of transcendence in dialogue with Kathryn Tanner and drawing on important historical Reformed sources to argue that God's transcendence of the created order does not entail that God is not simultaneously radically immanent to that order, including to human actions within creation. This leads to adoption of the doctrine of concurrence and the notion that divine action is supervenient upon created reality. Because the Christian God is triune, we must also explain precisely how God as Trinity relates to the world as market, or at least to the part of the world that is the market. In other words, those aspects of the economy immanent to the world will need to be connected to actions of the

transcendent persons of the Trinity whose work *ad extra* has traditionally been held to be indivisible but still distinguishable so as to terminate in one person in a certain manner (*certo modo*). In short, we can speak of all human action as in some sense concurrent with a divine action properly appropriated to Father, Son, or Spirit and oriented toward communion with God.

Chapter 3 builds upon the insight that all divine action in the world is supervenient upon created reality to identify three immanent terms of God's action in the economy that can be appropriated to the Father, Son, and Spirit. I will build upon Kevin Hector's pneumatology that identifies reciprocal-recognition and norms as the work of the Holy Spirit, arguing that such norms are only intelligible within a particular social imaginary and only sustainable through the exercise of a particular identity. A fully trinitarian account of the immanent terms of divine action in the economy must ascribe norms to the Spirit, social imaginaries to the Father, and identity to the Son. I will argue that these three created realities are the means by which three dimensions of transformed life are realized: orthopathy, orthodoxy, and orthopraxis. At the end of this discussion, the necessary theological and metaphysical foundations of the work will be complete.

Chapters 4 through 6 serve to connect the theology already developed to concrete economic concerns, further unpacking the role of the Father in the social imaginary, of the Son in identity, and of the Spirit in norms along the way. Throughout these chapters I will pay particular attention to specific economic models and to the findings of experimental and behavioral economics. This focus is rooted in the belief that models are a primary means by which economics shapes the social world, and in the conviction that behavioral and experimental economics are disciplines particularly helpful in

illuminating how subjects in our contemporary social world are influenced by such models and institutions that rest upon them. Chapters 4 through 6 will also explain how the divine work supervenient upon created realities within the economy corresponds with the divine work in the *ordo salutis* as articulated in Reformed theology, in order to better explain how creation is oriented toward redemption.

Chapter 4 explores how the market is a socially constructed reality that depends upon and reinforces a particular social imaginary. Because of the constructed and linguistic nature of the market, it is particularly susceptible to transmitting and modifying a social imaginary through the economic models that are the basis for market design and much market activity. I will explain here how many contemporary economic models depersonalize and objectify human beings, undermining the Father's work of general revelation in the economy and resisting the common grace that forms human beings into subjects capable of having communion with the divine Persons through the created order. In short, much contemporary economic theory undermines orthopathy.

Chapter 5 explores the concept of identity, arguing that identity is the means whereby an individual develops certain Background capacities within a social imaginary that allows that individual to occupy a certain role within an imaginary and to therefore perform specific actions within that imaginary. For the Christian, living into the identity received in Christ through justification is the basis for transformation through sanctification. Unfortunately many economic models contribute to the construction of an economy that eliminates personal identity through instrumental logic and prioritization of preferences over identity. A market economy built using economic models that could



attend to identity would be better suited to allow Christians to live into the identity received in justification as a means of growing in sanctification through economy.

Chapter 6 concludes the economic analysis by considering the role of norms in economics. Three main features will be highlighted. First, when self-interested behavior is treated as normative, economic agents tend to be more self-interested, and much of economic theory does in fact treat self-interested behavior as normative rational economic behavior. Second, when incentives are used to direct behavior, internal motivations tend to wither, which may impede virtuous actions. Third and finally, because most economic models reduce human actions to the pursuit of preferences, economic models cannot contribute to the construction of a market that fosters the pursuit of virtue through commitment to a *telos* ordained by God. Each of these problems impedes the development of orthopraxis whereby a believer progresses in sanctification through the work of the Holy Spirit toward the end of communion with the triune God.

The concluding chapters are not intended to offer an exhaustive analysis of how the marketplace can be a sphere through which God works to bring about redemption, nor a complete survey of possible ways in which our economic interactions can refuse such divine efforts. Rather, I hope to show how one might approach economic questions with a well-rounded eye to orthodoxy, orthopathy, and orthopraxis in the context of specific questions without distorting the theological basis for such analysis. The end result is the hopeful claim that markets can be designed in such a way as to not distort human participation in the divine life and human communion with the Triune God, coupled with a realistic acknowledgement that there is much to be done before current economic theory is capable of addressing the questions that might concern the theologian intent on

warning Christians where they may be “kicking against the goads” in their economic interactions.

## CHAPTER 1 – PERSPECTIVES ON THEOLOGY AND ECONOMY

Does capitalism work? is the wrong question to put to capitalism. It is the wrong question because it is rather obvious that capitalism works... Instead of asking, Does capitalism work? we ought to ask, What work does it do?

- Daniel M. Bell, Jr.<sup>1</sup>

Theology would crown itself the queen of the sciences, but many researchers, teachers, and practitioners of economics appear to be content with regicide. To these economists, it is not clear that theology has anything to say to the fundamental tasks of developing economic theory and models, collecting data, and making predictions. While there are certainly exceptions, by and large a particular version of the fact/value distinction articulated in terms of a difference between positive and normative economics reduces theology to a secondary role at best, and marginalizes theology entirely at worst. If such a distinction holds, then the question of how God works through the economy is doomed to go nowhere, especially if the focus in large part will be on what many economists consider economic facts. For this reason, I must first explain why a strong version of the positive/normative distinction in economics is not logically tenable before I can move to discuss how God works through the economy.

Once the aspects of economic theory that appear to provide *prima facie* reason to reject an enquiry into divine action in the marketplace are eliminated, a second difficulty pertaining to theology also must be addressed. Despite a proliferation of theological approaches to economic questions in recent theological scholarship, it is not always clear, first, how to relate the disparate approaches to one another and, second, how these approaches may relate to divine agency. While it would certainly be possible to proceed

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel M. Bell, *The Economy of Desire: Christianity and Capitalism in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012); 84.

as if existing theological texts had not been written, it would be quite foolish to ignore the fruit of such extensive labor, especially given the fact that a wide range of theological perspectives has uncovered significant information pertinent to this study. Therefore, a second prerequisite for this study is to survey the existing theological approaches to economics with an eye to uncovering how these studies have either intentionally or inadvertently uncovered evidence of divine action through the economy or of human resistance to this action. This survey will also begin the task of sorting theologians into relevant groupings that can be further utilized as this work unfolds, though a full basis for correlating various authors will not be completed until the beginning of chapter 3.

In certain respects, this chapter serves to cut away the brush currently blocking the path forward. Ultimately, the true goals of this study are to uncover evidence of divine action through the economy or human resistance to such action, to provide a theological and economic framework within which such actions can be discussed intelligibly, and to propose courses that contemporary economic theory can pursue in response to concerns by theologians. The remainder of this work will focus primarily on pursuing these research questions. However, before we can embark down this path, the two above obstacles must be addressed, clearing the trailhead to make the journey possible.

### **The Positive/Normative Distinction in Economic Theory**

In its most simple form, the distinction between positive and normative economics is put forward as a distinction between “the actual” or positive behavior of markets and “the desired” or normative behavior of markets.<sup>2</sup> The distinction is

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<sup>2</sup> Gary S. Becker, *Economic Theory* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 3.

understood to be one between scientific and ethical analysis. The idea of the positive/normative distinction historically developed in two forms. The first builds upon what is often called “Hume’s guillotine” and uses notions derived from logical positivism in the early twentieth century. Hume distinguished between statements of fact describing what “is,” and statements of obligation that describe what “ought to be.”<sup>3</sup> Hume suggests that there is no way to move from “is” to “ought,” and that there is therefore an insurmountable division between statements of fact and statements of value. Such a division assumed, of course, that there are no factual value statements. Logical positivists, drawing in part on Hume’s ideas, strengthened the claim by appealing to a verification principle for ascertaining the meaningfulness of statements.<sup>4</sup> This principle of verification went through numerous forms, but was perhaps most well known as presented by A.J. Ayer, who claimed that there are only two meaningful types of sentences: those analytic statements that are analytically true by definition, such as “all bachelors are unmarried men,” or statements that are either directly or indirectly verifiable.<sup>5</sup> All other statements, suggests Ayer, are not literally meaningful.<sup>6</sup> It is widely

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<sup>3</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

<sup>4</sup> John B. Davis, “Economists’ Odd Stand on the Positive-Normative Distinction: A Behavioral Economics View,” in *Oxford University Press Handbook on Professional Economic Ethics: Views from the Economics Profession and Beyond*, ed. G. DeMartino and D. McCloskey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> To be directly verifiable a statement must be an observation-statement or it must with other observation-statements entail an observation-statement that would not be deducible from these other premises alone. Something is indirectly verifiable if it is not an observation-statement, but if, with other verifiable or analytic non-observation statements, it entails an observation-statement that would not be deducible from these other premises alone.

<sup>6</sup> Alfred Jules Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1949), 13. Later revisions of the verification principle would often grant that these statements may have “grammatical meaning” but not “intelligibility” or “assertory meaning” or any number of comparable terms. The intention, though, is to suggest that these statements are not factual and do not even appear to have any propositional content. This appears to be in line with Ayer’s

argued that Lionel Robbins follows the positivist approach,<sup>7</sup> bequeathing that strain of the positive/normative distinction to subsequent generations of economists when he claims that, “Economics deals with ascertainable facts; ethics with valuations and obligations.” According to Robbins, this distinction is based on a “logical gulf” between the two that cannot be overcome.<sup>8</sup> Economics benefits from “verifiability by introspection and observation,” while ethics is merely a matter of “thy blood or mine.”<sup>9</sup> Paul Samuelson equally adopts the positivist approach in the first edition of his textbook when he distinguishes verifiable “meaningful theorems” in economics from those theories that rely on psychology, philosophy, and ethics.<sup>10</sup> If the logical positivist understanding of the positive/normative distinction is correct, the current project should be abandoned as meaningless and fruitless.

A second historical development of the positive/normative distinction draws on early work of Richard Whately, an economist turned Anglican archbishop who wanted to preserve a religious voice in matters of ultimate concern in the public sphere against “radicals” who wanted the utilitarian-influenced conclusions of political economy to guide all public policy.<sup>11</sup> Whately believed that political economy is concerned with

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emphasis on “literal” meaningfulness. Ayer would suggest that value statements are simply emotional in nature.

<sup>7</sup> Some do object to this interpretation, though Robbins’ ultimate position is not particularly important given that other economists (I will note Paul Samuelson below) certainly did follow a more positivist bent. For one recent different interpretation of Robbins, see David Colander and Hwei-Chun Su, “Making Sense of Economists’ Positive-Normative Distinction,” *Journal of Economic Methodology*, 22.2 (June 2015), 167-9.

<sup>8</sup> Lionel Robbins, *An Essay on the Nature & Significance of Economic Science* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1932), 132. This gulf is expressed as the difference between “is” and “ought.” Ibid., 133.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 132, 134.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Anthony Samuelson, *Foundations of Economic Analysis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947), 4. Later editions removed this claim.

<sup>11</sup> A.M.C. Waterman, “Whately, Senior, and the Methodology of Classical Economics,” in *Economics and Religion: Are They Distinct?* ed. H. Geoffrey Brennan and A.M.C. Waterman

means, but theology is concerned with ends.<sup>12</sup> Political economy would, according to this logic, provide various policy options along with the raw data to assess the effectiveness of these policies, but theology would determine which policy paths were morally permissible and which would result in the theologically desirable economic ends.

Whately's approach is distinct from the logical positivist understanding of the positive/normative distinction because it does allow for the possibility of genuine and meaningful theological knowledge playing a role in economics. In fact, some recent theologians still accept a version of Whately's positive/normative distinction. John Atherton suggests it is "one of the great misfortunes of Christian history" that theologians and church leaders have not recognized "the relative autonomy of economic and political thought" maintained through the positive/normative distinction.<sup>13</sup> Chad Brand and Tom Pratt argue that economics is a science that provides economic "laws" which "moral imperatives" cannot logically compel us to question. To challenge such laws would be akin to claiming it a moral imperative to believe that "two-plus-two is five."<sup>14</sup> Theologians like Philip Wogaman claim that theology's role is only to provide values and a valuation of values (i.e. a ranking of which values are most important) to determine which economic paths are ethically viable.<sup>15</sup> Despite such endorsements, even this interpretation would be disastrous for the current project insofar as it bars religion from having anything to say about the economic "facts." Ultimately, Whately's version of the

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(Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic, 1994), 41-60; John Atherton, *Christianity and the Market: Christian Social Thought for Our Times* (London: SPCK, 1992), 104-6.

<sup>12</sup> Atherton, *Christianity*, 105.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>14</sup> Chad Brand, and Tom Pratt, *Seeking the City: Wealth, Poverty, and Political Economy in Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2013), 836-8.

<sup>15</sup> J. Philip Wogaman, *Economics and Ethics: A Christian Inquiry* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1985), 2, 6, 11.

positive/normative distinction points toward a realm of autonomous facts independent from God and an understanding of religious statements as value statements, but certainly not as the human accounts of God's factual redemptive acts in the world. If theology is at all concerned about a God who works in the real world, then theology cannot remain silent on the facts about this world, even if the facts are of an economic nature. Though theology cannot replace economics as a discipline, it must be able to have input at all stages of economic analysis instead of only providing ethical parameters for policies derived from already developed economic models and theories.

As it turns out, there are strong reasons for doubting that a distinction between positive and normative approaches can perfectly correspond to a distinction between facts and values. Consider a basic neoclassical economic "fact" such as "increases in a price of a good A results in a decrease in demand for that good, *ceteris paribus*."<sup>16</sup> Like any theoretical foundation for any economic description, this claim depends on, to quote Pemberton and Finn, certain "basic assumptions that are value-laden and not value-free. In addition, since these assumptions are starting points, they are unproved and, at least within the science of economics, unprovable."<sup>17</sup> In this case, there is a certain theory of the rationality of various economic agents behind the claim that increases in price reduce demand. Rational agents are those who maximize utility. An increase in price of A will

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<sup>16</sup> Such a statement would not apply to a good for which there is fixed demand or a price elasticity of demand equal to zero.

<sup>17</sup> Prentiss L. Pemberton and Daniel Rush Finn. *Toward a Christian Economic Ethic: Stewardship and Social Power* (Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, 1985), 123. In fact, there is some statistical data that suggests that increases in price in many circumstances may result in increases in consumption. For example, when nineteenth century bread prices rose, the poor bought more bread than when prices were low and they had enough money left over after buying the necessary bread to consume meat. High bread prices did not leave adequate funds to buy meat, so excess bread was purchased instead. Jonathan Schlefer, *The Assumptions Economists Make* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 88. Though price increases may result in increased consumption for a number of reasons, economists tend to use the term Giffin goods to explain the situation.



allow a consumer on a fixed budget to buy less of other goods if that consumer continues consuming the same amount of the current good A. This reduces utility. The rationality of utility maximization indicates that certain consumers will shift to a new bundle of goods away from their current bundle along what economists call an indifference curve in order to buy a different bundle of goods with a lower quantity of A that provides a higher utility than that which would be received by continuing to consume the same quantity of good A. The problem with this assumption is that such rationality theory does not describe the “fact” of how economic agents operate<sup>18</sup> and it is unclear how an economist could even prove that agents were making choices based on utility.<sup>19</sup> Lionel Robbins himself objected to the unverifiability of such utility analysis,<sup>20</sup> but subsequent efforts at theories of “revealed preference” and other alternatives face equal challenges concerning verifiability.<sup>21</sup> In fact, it turns out that such rationality theories are neither purely factual

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<sup>18</sup> Aggregate data is not helpful in demonstrating the facticity of rationality theories because microeconomic theories of rationality treat variables like prices, inflation, or unemployment as given, while macroeconomic aggregates are what actually determine such variables endogenously. Reza Salehnejad, *Rationality, Bounded Rationality and Microfoundations: Foundations of Theoretical Economics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 60. Microeconomic demonstrations of individual rationality are also flawed, as is demonstrated in numerous behavioral studies. For example, see Dan Ariely, *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces that Shape Our Decisions*, revised ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2009). Rationality therefore appears to be more of an assertion than a fact. There are other examples of economic “facts” that appear to be largely assertions. For example, Robert Nelson points out that neoclassical appeals to the “market mechanism” are tautological and not scientifically demonstrated. Robert H. Nelson, *Economics as Religion: From Samuelson to Chicago and Beyond* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 58.

<sup>19</sup> Preferences, beliefs, and utility are not easily measured, and the three variables themselves are entangled in such a way as to make it impossible to distinguish them. Models are generally grounded on loose empirical observations, not rigorous analysis of data. Roger Backhouse, *Truth and Progress in Economic Knowledge* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 1997), 208.

<sup>20</sup> Lionel Robbins, “Interpersonal Comparisons of Utility: A Comment,” *Economic Journal* 48 (1938): 625-41.

<sup>21</sup> For revealed preference, the problem is rooted in a lack of adequate interpretive rules. For time sequenced tests of revealed preferences, the researcher has no way of discerning the baseline set of preferences, or of discerning whether preferences change for reasons other than the pertinent variables being empirically studied. Apart from these elements, a given interpretation of

accounts of economic agency nor purely ethical value statements about how an agent is morally obligated to act. Instead, such theories offer a sort of normative analysis describing how economic agents should act if they desire to be rational.<sup>22</sup> This example illustrates what is the case in any sort of description rooted in theoretical analysis: there are unprovable and often value-laden claims underlying the analysis which prevent a sharp fact/value distinction.<sup>23</sup> This is even the case with the philosophical program of the logical positivists, as the verification principle itself appears to be neither empirically verifiable nor clearly analytically included in the definition of meaningfulness, at least in any ordinary usage of the term.<sup>24</sup> Any positive description of “facts” would thus appear to depend on non-facts in a way that undermines a strong distinction between the facts and values of the sort advocated by the logical positivist interpretation of the positive/normative distinction.

Given the unprovable and often value-laden foundations for models and theories, is it not possible to still affirm a pure positive economics that simply avoids using such models and theories? This is the suggestion of Geoffrey Brennan, who believes that “the

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revealed preferences cannot be conclusively determined to signify one thing as opposed to another. Timothy P. Roth, *The Present State of Consumer Theory: The Implications for Social Welfare Theory* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998), 35-7.

<sup>22</sup> D. Wade Hands, “The Positive-Normative Dichotomy and Economics,” in *Philosophy of Economics*, ed. Uskali Mäki (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2012), 11-15.

<sup>23</sup> I have been using “value-laden” in a somewhat imprecise fashion; at times there are ethical assumptions that make theory value-laden, while at other times “epistemic values” concerning what ought to be the case in reasoning are assumed. On varieties of values, see Hilary Putnam, *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 30-31.

<sup>24</sup> If the verificationist proposes that this is what the definition of “meaningful” should be, one need only disagree to dismiss with the entire verificationist paradigm. Alvin Plantinga, *God and Other Minds: A Study of the Rational Justification of Belief in God*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), 167-8.

epistemological autonomy of positive economics may be bought at a fairly high price.”<sup>25</sup> Brennan claims that this high price may ultimately require sacrificing so many key elements of economic theory that the remaining elements are no longer particularly useful to the normative theory that now contains most of the material traditionally analyzed by economists. Nevertheless, presumably Brennan would admit that pure data collection on interest rates, expenditures, capital investment, price fluctuations, and so forth could be classified as a positive economics dealing with facts as opposed to a normative economics that is enmeshed with value judgments. However, even this solution faces three very significant problems. First, in the real world there are so many possible facts that could be collected that the selection of specific facts as significant requires certain value judgments that are based on our presuppositions. In this way, our presuppositions shape the outcome of any “factual” analysis by restricting the domain of possible relevant facts and therefore of possible conclusions.<sup>26</sup> Second, even within a specific set of selected data various categories of description for the data are still possible. A particular economic action can simultaneously be profitable, unjust, unexpected, utility-maximizing, immoral, and culturally aberrant. Choosing one category of description over another will not be a value-neutral exercise.<sup>27</sup> Third, even when we chose descriptive terminology, many terms are what Hilary Putnam calls “thick ethical concepts.” These are concepts such as “cruel” or “rude” in which fact and value are entangled. The terms

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<sup>25</sup> Brennan, H. Geoffrey, “The Impact of Theological Predispositions on Economics: A Commentary,” in *Economics and Religion: Are They Distinct?* ed. H. Geoffrey Brennan and A.M.C. Waterman (Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic, 1994), 168-9.

<sup>26</sup> Donald A. Hay, “On Being a Christian Economist,” in *Christianity and the Culture of Economics*, ed. Donald A. Hay and Alan Kreider (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), 167.

<sup>27</sup> John P. Tiemstra, et al. *Reforming Economics: Calvinist Studies on Methods and Institutions* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 69.

can be used in a purely descriptive way in an accurate and meaningful fashion, but they are also value-laden in a way that suggests there is no sharp fact/value distinction.<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps the positive/normative distinction can be salvaged without resorting to drastic measures like Brennan. Mark Blaug argues that we cannot claim that there are no objective statements because that very statement would then be objective, requiring us to lapse into pure subjectivity.<sup>29</sup> He admits that there is “no absolutely watertight distinction between positive and normative economics,” but suggests that the distinction is methodological and points to “an ideal at which to aim.”<sup>30</sup> While values do tend to seep into positive analysis, the main distinction between positive and normative approaches lies in the fact that positive analysis places a priority on producing and testing falsifiable theories in line with scientific methodology, while normative analysis depends upon value judgments that cannot be adjudicated in this manner.<sup>31</sup> Such a methodological distinction appears to offer the hope of evading the problem of unprovable foundations in positive economics by suggesting that they may be falsifiable if their predictions are not validated. This methodological dichotomy would then allow for a positive/normative distinction in line with Whately’s views, where normative analysis could be open to a different methodology, perhaps one where theology could be utilized.

While plausible at first look, in the end Blaug’s proposal fails due to the fact that, unlike the physical sciences, economic theories and predictions affect what they predict.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Putnam, *Collapse*, 35-43.

<sup>29</sup> Mark Blaug, *The Methodology of Economics: or How Economists Explain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 116.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 119, 134.

<sup>32</sup> Peter L. Danner, *The Economic Person: Acting and Analyzing* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), vii. cf. Lorna Gold, *New Financial Horizons: The Emergence of the Economy of Communion* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2010), 25.

The final three chapters of this work will point to numerous examples of this being the case, so I will delay providing examples until that time. What the influence of predictions on the economy means is that, methodologically speaking, falsification may not be possible. A theory that may not accurately represent the reality described at the time the theory is developed may have influenced that reality in such a way that the representation is far more accurate by the time predictions can be tested. If this occurs, an originally untrue theory will not be falsified but will instead change the world it describes. As D. Stephen Long points out, economists' discussions of facts are often a matter of *poesis*, discussions of "a brute *factum*" forgetful of the associated creative act (*facere* – to make) bringing about such facts.<sup>33</sup> The creative nature of economics results in what James K. A. Smith has aptly called the perpetual "contestability of the empirical."<sup>34</sup>

Here one might stop to object that a theologian making such arguments is overstating the case. John Lunn and Robin Klay, for example, object to what they view as "postmodern" attempts by some Christian economists, theologians, and philosophers to challenge the positive/normative distinction. Lunn and Klay argue that making a statement about historical growth in the money supply and making a statement about how the money supply ought to change in the coming year are clearly two different sorts of statement.<sup>35</sup> This may well be the case, but admitting that economists have different objectives in mind when doing positive and normative analysis, or to grant that positive and normative statements have different intended meanings, does not require an

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<sup>33</sup> D. Stephen Long and Nancy Ruth Fox with Tripp York, *Calculated Futures* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 103-4.

<sup>34</sup> James K.A. Smith, "The 'Ecclesial Critique' of Globalization: Rethinking the Questions," *Faith & Economics* 56 (Fall 2010), 8.

<sup>35</sup> John Lunn and Robin Klay. "The Neoclassical Economic Model in a Postmodern World," *Christian Scholars Review* 24.2 (1994), 155. cf. Blaug, *Methodology*, 115.

acceptance of the claim that a positive/normative distinction corresponds to a fact/value distinction and that, therefore, theology can only contribute to economic analysis by providing value parameters after the facts have been described by the economists.

I intend only to object to what I will call a strong positive/normative distinction, where a strong positive/normative distinction is one that: (a) correlates a positive/normative binary with a fact/value binary, (b) suggests that the facts uncovered by positive analysis are purely objective in the sense of being distinct and autonomous from the researcher and research process, and (c) relegates religion to the realm of values and normative analysis (provided such normative analysis is even admissible). Such a strong distinction would provide *prima facie* reason to abandon the current research enquiries given that I propose to explore the religiously significant elements of economic modeling to determine how God could act through them and/or how human beings could use them in a manner that undermines their ability to participate in the redemptive actions of God. If such modeling was an entirely objective and detached description of economic facts, then it would seem that there could be little to no human responsibility for any malformation of economic agents in the market, nor any hope for resisting such negative effects through human efforts. The above arguments suggest that a strong positive/normative distinction is untenable. When economists describe the world, they use models and theories and labels that are not value-free, and their economic methodology cannot have the degree of scientific objectivity sought by Blaug because economic analysis affects the object of study. Therefore religion should not be relegated to the realms of values and normative analysis because there is no reason to provide economics a privileged or exclusive role in constructing the social world and because

theologians are arguably better equipped on the whole to deal with the values that inevitably enter economic analysis.

A weak version of the positive/normative distinction that recognized the problems in a fact/value dichotomy would fit with Lunn and Klay's description of the distinctions without requiring that I abandon the current project.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, some version of the distinction must be maintained, as entirely abandoning it would bring about the suspicion that the economy is infinitely malleable, purely a construct of values divorced from any material constraints. This is not the end I am seeking, first, because philosophically speaking equally plausible arguments can be raised against collapsing facts purely into constructed values as can be raised against fully divorcing the two domains. Second, and more importantly, because theologically we must remember that God created the material world and called it very good (Gen. 1:31). Whatever material or natural constraints come into play in economic modeling, these very constraints are part of the cosmos that the Scriptures claim is waiting in "eager longing" for the final redemption toward which God is working (Rom. 8:19). It is not through a denial of the material, historical, or natural constraints of the economy that theology is rendered relevant, but rather through a recognition that these material, historical, and natural constraints are inescapably related to God, and thus unavoidably the subject of theological analysis.

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<sup>36</sup> For example, Edwin Dolan suggests that positive economic statements are of the form, "If policy X, then Outcome Y," while normative statements take the form "Outcome Y is good." Provided that positive statements of this form are recognized as potentially performative (i.e. non-objective) and value-laden, and that normative statements are recognized as potentially factual, I suspect Dolan's definition may provide precisely the sort of weak positive/normative distinction that is needed. Edwin G. Dolan, *Basic Economics*. (Hinsdale, IL: The Dryden Press, 1980), 14.

## **Theological Approaches to Economics**

If economists do not have a monopoly on describing the economy and identifying significant economic data, theology is related to all aspects of the economy. This is not to suggest that economics can be collapsed into theology, but it is to say that no aspect of economic theory is fully devoid of theological significance. Theologians and economists do not use the same methods or deploy the same analytic tools, but they do speak about the same realities, and they can do so in complementary or conflicting ways. It is not easy to move from this general recognition toward specific dialogue between economists and theologians, in part because theological approaches to economics are themselves quite diverse, and often seemingly incommensurable. The present study illustrates the fact well. Two lines of enquiry will unfold in the following chapters exploring whether God acts through the economy and asking how human beings might be able to refuse to participate in this action if it occurs. Unfortunately, questions of divine agency are rarely at the forefront of existing theological studies of the economy, and it is difficult to know precisely how to relate diverse existing approaches to one another in a manner that will produce helpful material for the development of a study on such agency. Therefore, before the bulk of the work can proceed, some effort must be made to relate existing approaches to one another in a manner that will be useful to this study while remaining fair to the projects of the considered authors.

The task at this stage is not primarily to evaluate the specific claims of how economic interactions may play a role in the formation of human beings, or to identify the extent to which such formation may be identified with divine action or resistant to it; the time for such evaluation will come. Rather, this initial survey serves three purposes.



First, it provides justification for the research questions at hand by attempting to identify ways that the economy shapes individuals in redemptively significant ways. Chapter 2 will offer a longer discussion of the term “redemptively significant.” For present purposes it is sufficient to know that the term specifies any sort of formation of or action by an economic agent that fits with the theological description of how a human being is transformed through the process of redemption, particularly in sanctification. Insofar as God accomplishes salvation, such formation through the economy must be understood in some fashion as a divine action. As the survey will show, a wide range of approaches have made claims consonant with the hypothesis that God works in the economy and that human beings can resist this divine action, so the survey will provide plausibility to the thesis and an initial foundation of data for further consideration. Second, even though I will not yet significantly evaluate the claims uncovered in the survey, I will identify ways in which existing approaches have failed to attend to the question of divine agency, a gap that this study will attempt to rectify. Third, I will begin the task of sorting theological approaches to economics into categories that can be used later in this study.

Due to the substantial amounts of material for analysis, this initial survey will limit itself either to larger schools of thought or to individuals whose methods can be aggregated into something similar to a school of thought, even if the particular authors considered might not recognize any allegiance to one another. Furthermore, the following analysis will restrict itself to approaches that have been prominent in roughly the last half-century. Limitations of this sort are necessary given the reality that both theology and economics are dynamic fields whose approaches and emphases are constantly

changing.<sup>37</sup> This restriction will allow me to uncover theological conclusions still significant for any contemporary application in economic questions, while limiting the material to a manageable (yet still formidable) amount.

Since the middle of the twentieth century, numerous different approaches to systematic theology and economics have filled volumes of published books, not to mention thousands of academic journal, magazine, and newspaper articles. I will address major groupings in the following categories that I believe best capture this wide range of

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<sup>37</sup> In approximately the last fifty years, for example, liberal theology has been eclipsed by a number of new approaches, including post-liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, and a variety of postmodern and perspectival schools. This shift has fundamentally altered the liberal/fundamentalist dichotomy in Protestant theology that would have been a predominant heuristic in any thorough analysis even fifty years ago. Furthermore, the last fifty years have seen the rise of virtue ethics, a shift toward postmodern continental philosophy, a turn away from historical-critical exegesis toward literary or theological interpretation, the increasing significance of Vatican II in the Roman Catholic Church, and the rise of ecumenical theology in a way that would have been inconceivable even a century ago. In the field of economics, the past half century has witnessed the demise of communism, a shift away from Keynesian analysis toward Chicago-school approaches (followed by an even more recent proliferation of methodologies including behavioral economics, game theory, and structuralist approaches), and a marked increase in the sophistication of mathematical analysis as well as in the areas in which such analysis is deployed. These changes are only the most dramatic among numerous smaller developments. While such developments do not entail that older approaches have no bearing on current economic realities or on theological questions, they do suggest that the older approaches would require additional work both to update the theological material and to fit this updated material to economics as it is practiced today. This consideration will require constraints in terms of the theologians addressed in this section. One can certainly admit that the historical development of economics has lasting significance on the practice today, and as such older economic viewpoints will at times play a role in this study. However, even granting such influence, the main focus of this work will remain contemporary economics given the fact that a number of valuable studies already exist that engage the theological and economic significance of this historical development. The work I see as particularly helpful in engaging theological aspects of important historical economic figures is D. Stephen Long, *Divine Economy: Theology and the Market* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 27-29, 94-101, 197-201. See also John D. Mueller, *Redeeming Economics: Rediscovering the Missing Element* (Wilmington, DE: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2010), 11-130; John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, second edition (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2006), 7-47; Duncan Foley, *Adam's Fallacy: A Guide to Economic Theology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 213-228.

publications in manageable units. Among approaches focusing on macroeconomics<sup>38</sup> a *legitimizing* approach seeks to use theology to commend a particular existing economic system, while a *re-imagining* approach focuses on reconceiving the economy as a new economic system rooted in some theological contribution. The *radical orthodoxy* movement explores the hidden theological aspects of particular macroeconomic economic theories and systems, though arguably this approach has split into two camps with an American branch concentrating on more microeconomic concerns. The Catholic encyclical tradition has proven particularly fruitful in assessing the economy from a theological perspective, spawning three significant movements. A *redistributionist approach* common among several grassroots movements that began before the timeframe considered remains influential in its emphasis on developing an economy of just distribution. *Economic personalism* is a movement that focuses on re-working economic models by using the idea of a person as drawn from personalist philosophy to replace the individualistic *homo economicus*. *Liberation theology*, particularly in its Latin American form, deploys Marxist analysis and appropriates themes from popular spirituality to explore how theology can identify and support a liberating praxis that overcomes oppression, poverty, and violence. Two final approaches tend to focus on religious aspects of the economy through sustained dialogue with other social sciences. An *economics as religion* approach identifies various aspects of economics that fit with religious belief widely construed. This approach has a decidedly anthropological leaning. A *sociology of religion* approach seeks to use sociology to identify ways that the

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<sup>38</sup> Macroeconomics refers to the study of the economy on a large scale, focused on the aggregation of the economic decisions of individual firms, consumers, or workers, and paying particular attention to the roles of government policies and legal and social frameworks.

economy may effect religious beliefs and practices through use of an analytical framework informed by sociological analysis.

To an extent, the groups discussed below may seem arbitrary, and in many instances alternative categories could easily be imagined.<sup>39</sup> However, the groupings are selected with an eye toward the basic ways that each group sees theology influencing the economic subject or economics influencing religious subjects so that they can help identify basic ways that God may be working through the economy toward redemption, or how human beings may fail to participate in this redemptive activity. Therefore, while certain perspectives are left out,<sup>40</sup> and while categories could be changed, the above groups are more easily able to contribute to the task at hand than other possibilities.

### *Macroeconomic Approaches*

Three predominant schools of thought are characterized by an emphasis on macroeconomic concerns. In other words, these approaches typically reach conclusions about an economic system as a whole by drawing on a variety of theological resources in order to either endorse or vilify capitalism (the most common economic system discussed in recent literature). The legitimizing approach, the re-imagining approach, and radical

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<sup>39</sup> While the basic contours of liberation theology should be quite clear to most in the academic community, some of my other categories could easily be restructured without raising concerns. For example, Phillip Goodchild, Daniel Bell, and Kenneth Surin could be fittingly grouped into a broad, critical re-appropriation of Deleuze. Instead, I include Goodchild with the re-imagining approach, Bell in radical orthodoxy, and Surin is neglected altogether in this discussion. Kenneth Surin, *Freedom not yet: Liberation and the Next World Order* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009); Bell, *Economy*; Phillip Goodchild, *Theology of Money* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

<sup>40</sup> I am particularly aware of the fact that I could not identify any salient features of feminist analysis that united numerous voices in a way germane to the question at hand. Some feminist voices in theological economics such as Marion Grau have methods and perspectives seemingly incommensurable with the task I have set myself. Voice like Grau's will unfortunately be entirely neglected moving forward: Marion Grau, *Of Divine Economy: Refinancing Redemption* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004).

orthodoxy all have such a macroeconomic focus, though exceptions particularly among radical orthodox theologians will be discussed below. Of these three groupings, the legitimizing approach is perhaps the most common.

The school of thought that I am calling the “legitimizing approach” does not consist of any self-consciously collaborative effort, and the theologians who fit into this grouping are not unified by any specific set of shared theological or philosophical commitments. Rather, the various authors whose works fit in this category come from a broad spectrum of theological orientations, ecclesiastical affiliations, and academic specializations. Despite such diversity, the authors considered do share a common objective: utilizing a wide variety of theological resources to demonstrate the superiority of a particular economic system (often coupled with a particular set of governmental policies). Though there are some who defend socialism in this fashion, since the downfall of communism in the USSR defenses of capitalism are by far the most common examples of the legitimizing approach, particularly in English-language works.<sup>41</sup> Given this prevalence, my analysis will focus on those who defend capitalism.

Specific details often widely vary. Some defend capitalism on the ground that its success depends on certain virtues, virtues which capitalism is in turn able to reproduce.<sup>42</sup>

Others suggest that capitalism is the only economic system sufficiently grounded in

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<sup>41</sup> Sometimes the legitimizing approach defends the “market” *per se*: Robert Sirico, *Defending the Free Market: The Moral Case for a Free Economy* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2012); Jay W. Richards, *Money, Greed, and God: Why Capitalism is the Solution and Not the Problem* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009). At other times, the legitimizing approach defends the market in conjunction with a particular set of policies or with a particular macroeconomic theory: Brand and Pratt, *Seeking*. See also Michael Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (Lanham: Madison Books, 1991); Scott Rae and Austin Hill, *The Virtues of Capitalism: A Moral Case for Free Markets* (Chicago, IL: Northfield, 2010).

<sup>42</sup> Deirdre N. McCloskey, *The Bourgeois Virtues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

Biblical principles.<sup>43</sup> Though specific lines of argumentation may vary in their content and methodology, all of the groups in the legitimizing approach share a concern for identifying the existing economic system that is most theologically acceptable. I choose the word “legitimize” recognizing its ambiguity. In a psychological context, legitimizing may be understood as arising from a psychological need to defend the status quo, and at times certain texts in this group may tend to have a panegyric flavor to them. However, the best representatives of this approach fit under a second meaning of “legitimize:” to render legitimate. These theologians, of whom Daniel Finn is perhaps the best representative, seek to articulate the conditions under which a particular economy would be rendered morally legitimate.

Finn rightly recognizes that the polemical debates between central planning and the free market present a faulty dilemma insofar as there are numerous possible formulations of the “free market.” Using the metaphor of a fence that determines the limits of a space, Finn demonstrates that there are numerous possible fences that allow for possible spaces of free exchange within a wide variety of legal and institutional parameters.<sup>44</sup> One does not simply choose between central planning and capitalism, but rather determines what sort of capitalism will be constructed.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, moral evaluations of a market must consider the entire “ecology” of a market, which he suggests includes four elements: the provision of goods and services, the morality of individuals and groups active in the market, the underlying civil society, and the

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<sup>43</sup> Brand and Pratt. *Seeking*.

<sup>44</sup> Daniel K. Finn, *The Moral Ecology of Markets: Assessing Claims About Markets and Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 114-122.

<sup>45</sup> Compare Finn’s fence metaphor with the less sophisticated distinction between “two capitalisms” offered by Richard Neuhaus, who suggests that these two kinds to a large extent reflect the cultural and moral values of their participants. Richard John Neuhaus, *Doing Well & Doing Good: The Challenge to the Christian Capitalist* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 56.

character of the market.<sup>46</sup> While Finn does not directly evaluate specific markets, his suggestions for how such a legitimizing analysis should proceed offer a persuasive foundation.<sup>47</sup> Any “economic defense of self-interest is conditional,” and the conditions of a proper ecology must be fulfilled to render a market morally legitimate.<sup>48</sup> In Finn’s own words, we might say:

For all the advantages of markets, it is morally naïve for proponents to argue that ‘free’ markets (perhaps, those regularly approximating the fences in the U.S. economy) ought to be implemented everywhere without regard to the presence of the proper substructuring of the other three elements in [the] moral ecology.<sup>49</sup>

Finn’s analysis demonstrates that any viable legitimizing approach will need to address the contingency and variability intrinsic in any constructed reality like the market. This claim is tremendously significant for present purposes. If the particular ways in which human beings act within the market leads to morally permissible or impermissible outcomes depending on a wide range of largely human-controlled variables, then any redemptively significant outcome arising from a particular market will be contingent upon a certain set of variable possibilities obtaining. The theologian cannot imagine a particular economic system as handed down from heaven in a way that renders it unconditionally a rightly-ordered space. Conversely, human beings also possess the capability of moving the fences or modifying the four elements of the moral ecology of markets to undermine the moral nature of the market. One possible redemptively significant way that markets shape economic agents is to provide them a context for virtuous economic actions made possible by a proper moral ecology, and such formation

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<sup>46</sup> In the same argument Finn also claims that “the question ‘Are markets just?’ ignored the political, social, and cultural contexts of markets.” Finn, *Ecology*, 108.

<sup>47</sup> I say they provide a foundation because, as I will suggest later, Finn neglects certain aspects of the market that may be morally relevant.

<sup>48</sup> Finn, *Ecology*, 142.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

must also be somehow understood as divine action. If this is true, then it stands to reason that certain human actions establishing maladaptive moral ecologies of markets would then be examples of human beings subverting some aspect of the divine work toward redemption through the economic sphere.

In contrast to the legitimizing approach, the re-imagining approach does not find the existing set of economic options appealing. Often particularly abhorring capitalism, proponents of this approach prefer instead to imagine a new economic world with contributions from Christian theology. Notable advocates of this approach include Sallie McFague, Philip Goodchild, David Schindler, and Kathryn Tanner.<sup>50</sup> While these theologians may differ in many of their conclusions and assumptions, each of them allows theology to function in a similar manner in terms of their engagement of markets. The re-imagining approach attempts to help us, using McFague's terminology as illustrative, "reconceive ourselves"<sup>51</sup> to enable a "fundamental shift to community values"<sup>52</sup> that facilitates a new idea of economy. In McFague's eyes this means advocating an "ecological economy" instead of the existing neoclassical one. The ecological economy begins with a view of humans as individuals-in-community who possess individuality only by virtue of being part of a community, while the community

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<sup>50</sup> Sallie McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001); Goodchild, *Money*; David L. Schindler, *Heart of the World, Center of the Church: Communion Ecclesiology, Liberalism, and Liberation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996); Kathryn Tanner, *Economy of Grace*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2005). Distributism could be included here, though I have chosen to treat it as a distinct phenomenon. This is because, while the theologians considered in this group share a common approach but reach different conclusions using different tools, the theologians and economists who advocate distributism tend to share similar tools, theological assumptions, and conclusions. We will also discuss M. Douglas Meeks in the next chapter, who could have also been included at this juncture.

<sup>51</sup> McFague, *Life*, 102.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 114. Such values include recognition of money as a means, not an end, an emphasis on frugality, and a prioritization of sustainability.



itself exists only insofar as individuals-in-relation constitute it. While the focus of this discussion is centered on humans, such interconnectivity necessarily includes all of creation. A community can only survive if the world itself survives, and McFague claims such survival requires a distributive justice that balances income for all humans without a communist insistence on “absolute parity in material goods.”<sup>53</sup> Instead, the ecological economy must arise from “envisioning [an] alternative world view” with significant help from theology.<sup>54</sup> McFague’s proposal, which needs no further explanation for present purposes, illustrates the basic contours of the re-imagining approach: theology is appealed to in order to provide a fundamental reorientation of the paradigm offered by (typically neoclassical) capitalism. This reorientation requires certain basic shifts in worldview, in cultural values, and in the basic way that economic agents understand the economy and its exchanges. It results in an entirely new form of economy.

The pattern evident in McFague is repeated when David Schindler suggests that human creativity should be seen as a gift “generously extending to others what has first been given and what we have therefore always-already first received.”<sup>55</sup> With such a view of gift in mind, Schindler interprets the papal encyclical *Centesimus Annus* as endorsing a sort of liberation theology (to be discussed below) which “calls forth a free response to the gift of creation”<sup>56</sup> in a way that the document’s “civilization of love” is something distinct from contemporary liberalism and capitalism. This theological insight serves as the basis for re-imagining the economy. Similarly, Kathryn Tanner advocates a

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid. 109. This is partly why McFague fits in the re-imagining approach, as she does not see herself advocating an existing economic system, be it capitalist or communist, as the members of the legitimizing approach do.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>55</sup> Schindler, *Heart*, 119. Schindler is writing against neoconservatives like Michael Novak, rejecting a legitimizing approach that fully endorses capitalism.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 129.

type of formal analysis that compares the relations between theological concepts to the relations between economic ideas<sup>57</sup> to help “imagine alternatives to capitalism.”<sup>58</sup> Tanner ultimately identifies the theological idea of the unconditional, universal, and noncompetitive grace of God as a point of “relevant intersection and intervention” from which a change can be made.<sup>59</sup> Philip Goodchild’s analysis, though quite different in style and content from McFague, Schindler, and Tanner, reaches a similar conclusion. In his case, the re-imagined economy would include a “secondary tier of the economy” which would allow for the “production and distribution of effective evaluations.”<sup>60</sup>

The fact that each of the theologians in the re-imagining group sees a need to appeal to theology to fundamentally alter existing neoclassical conceptions of the basic nature of the economy suggests that these authors tacitly recognize that the particular economic mindsets can influence elements of what for now I will call a worldview in ways that are contrary to sound theology. For Goodchild, this recognition is explicit. He fears that modern democracy constructs a homogenous collective will that disguises the fact that citizens are controlled by consumer desire and money.<sup>61</sup> In fact, he sees the entire modern social and economic world as an abstract, idealized representation that pretends to be obtained in order to sustain the sphere of value and the valuation of the money that circulates in this sphere.<sup>62</sup> In reality, the utopian pretension of secular freedom and economic prosperity is an illusion. Money itself has the power, and

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<sup>57</sup> Tanner, *Economy*, 10.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>60</sup> Goodchild, *Money*, 243.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 54-55.

“reconstitutes the social order as an order of interdependence, of desire, and of credit.”<sup>63</sup>

These claims, if correct, would suggest that money has a tremendous influence on human desires and social relations: “The market effects its own disciplining and ordering of desire.”<sup>64</sup> The question then becomes whether this disciplining is consonant with divine action toward sanctification of desire or dissonant with it.

While divine action itself is not a central theological concern for many in the re-imagining approach, the emphasis on the transformative role that theology can play in re-imagining the economy shared by theologians in this group suggests that God may be working to transform the world through theology, at least if we suppose that theology is something more than a purely human effort and accept some notion of revelation as an action of God. While extensive treatment of divine action must be delayed until chapter 2, it is at least plausible for a religion of the book like Christianity to grant some form of revelation, and thereby to also concede that any deployment of a theology grounded in revelation that is transformative in a redemptively significant manner must be understood in some sense to be a deployment dependent upon divine action. Ultimately, I hope to show that the case can be made in a much stronger fashion.

The Radical Orthodoxy movement, a third significant approach to macroeconomics, draws its name from an effort to be orthodox in a modern age by drawing on historical roots (*radix* – root) of Christianity to strongly (here also radically) critique the modern project.<sup>65</sup> The various contributors to the “Radical Orthodoxy” series frequently speak of economics, and several have continued to write on economic subjects

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>65</sup> John Milbank, Graham Ward, and Catherine Pickstock, “Suspending the Material: The Turn of Radical Orthodoxy,” in *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*, ed. John Milbank, Graham Ward, and Catherine Pickstock (New York: Routledge, 1999), 2.

in later volumes. Setting aside smaller elements of diversity among the various contributors, Radical Orthodox theologians typically challenge modern conceptions of the economy as ultimately nihilistic and agonistic, flaws that arise from the nominalist metaphysic undergirding modern social sciences that eliminates the possibility of participatory metaphysics where the immanent, material world is suspended in the transcendent.<sup>66</sup> For example, John Milbank claims Ockham's move toward voluntarism helped construct a view of the political as pure power, while a nominalist emphasis on the strongly simple will of God that displaced a Trinitarian theology placed an emphasis on individual willers, eliminated an ontology of participation, and helped bring about a contractual view of society.<sup>67</sup> Once these shifts in political thought opened up the possibility of the idea of a just contractual society, early economists sought to develop a view of providence to maintain such a just contractual society.<sup>68</sup> However, this approach viewed justice in terms of an internal disposition and not a final *telos*,<sup>69</sup> resulting in a neo-pagan notion of the market as a space of agonistics.<sup>70</sup>

The broad strokes of Milbank's approach are found in other radical orthodox theologians writing on economic matters. Like Milbank, D. Stephen Long seeks to overcome the "all-consuming subjugating power" of capitalism by locating it within a particular history.<sup>71</sup> Particularly relevant for present purposes is Long's claim that both what he calls the dominant tradition and the emergent tradition identify the political

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<sup>66</sup> For a good introductory survey of Radical Orthodox thought on participation see: James K.A. Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 74-77, 88-96.

<sup>67</sup> John Milbank, *Social Theory*, 10-16.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-33.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>71</sup> D. Stephen Long, *Divine Economy*, 119.

sphere with a conflictual realm of pure power, something he traces to Max Weber.<sup>72</sup> Long offers a counter-narrative rooted in a historically informed notion of the true, the good, and the beautiful as manifest in Milbank, Bernard Dempsey, and Alasdair MacIntyre as a means of overcoming a formalized capitalism and a misunderstanding of the political sphere as a realm of pure power. Continuing in this trend, Daniel Bell's *Liberation Theology After the End of History*, Radical Orthodoxy's initial major engagement with liberation theology (discussed below), criticizes the liberationists' understanding of politics as statecraft.<sup>73</sup> In Bell's understanding, "politics as statecraft" is an approach that treats the state as the primary agent of political and/or economic transformation to the exclusion of the church. Such reliance on the coercive power of the state, coupled with an emphasis on distributive justice, leads liberation theology to "exacerbate" the violent and conflictual nature of global capitalism that the liberationists so heavily criticize.<sup>74</sup> Here again, a concern for the agonistic character of the economy is at the forefront. If these concerns about the conflictual nature of capitalism are correct, and if the final state is a state of peace, then it stands to reason that an economy grounded in agonistics and perpetuating such conflict is one that resists the redemptive working whereby God makes the kingdom present in partial form today.

Interestingly, Bell's disquiet about politics as statecraft in his early work points toward a divergence that would develop between British contributors to the radical orthodoxy project and American contributors. Generally, the British contributors focus on macroeconomic solutions often through policy changes, practically serving as a

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>73</sup> Daniel M. Bell, *Liberation Theology After the End of History: The Refusal to Cease Suffering* (London New York: Routledge, 2001), 43-44, 65-68.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 128, 151.

legitimizing strategy for a certain brand of socialism.<sup>75</sup> American radical orthodox thinkers like Bell, Long and James K. A. Smith, however, have taken a more microeconomic turn.<sup>76</sup> Bell's work will be particularly important in later chapters, so it will only be briefly explained now. In his earliest work, Bell had already argued that capitalism deploys "technologies of desire" to discipline individual desires in a way that undermines various theological, political, and cultural values.<sup>77</sup> By the time of his later work on theology and economics, Bell makes this aspect of capitalism far more central to his analysis, focusing on the way that capitalist technologies of desire distort a right view of the individual economic agent, of God, and of the good.<sup>78</sup> His end conclusion is that, "The capitalist economy of desire is a manifestation of sin because it both corrupts desire and obstructs communion."<sup>79</sup> This emphasis on the way that capitalism can discipline desires, forming an economic agent in ways contrary to a theologically proper formation yet again suggests that human beings can seemingly resist God's work in transforming the world through particular aspects of the economy.

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<sup>75</sup> See the summary offered in D. Stephen Long, "Radical Orthodoxy," in *The Routledge Companion to Modern Christian Thought*, ed. Chad Meister and James Beilby (New York: Routledge, 2013), 647-657. The socialistic tendencies of English Radical Orthodoxy is perhaps yielding to an emphasis on red toryism.

<sup>76</sup> See Long and Fox, *Calculated Futures*. Long retains a concern with any understanding of economics as power (77, 143), but he rejects nationalist-socialist macroeconomic solutions (103-104). The microeconomic shift in Long is even more evident in Smith, who explores the liturgical nature of the shopping mall, for example, to identify the formative role of consumerist elements of culture. James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 93-103.

<sup>77</sup> Bell, *Liberation Theology*, 3-4.

<sup>78</sup> Daniel M. Bell, *The Economy of Desire: Christianity and Capitalism in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), especially chapter 4.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

*Roman Catholic Claimants to the “Third Way”*

With the publication of the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891 the Roman Catholic Church began a fruitful tradition of theological reflection on economic matters.<sup>80</sup> Critical of both Marxism and *laissez-faire* capitalism<sup>81</sup> and rejecting both collectivism and individualism, as the encyclical tradition developed in the later *Quadragesimo anno* and subsequent texts it began to point toward a “third way.” Historically, significant economists like Heinrich Pesch (1854-1926), John Ryan (1869-1945), and Bernard Dempsey (1903-1960) sought to develop economic tools to build the third way, and attempts to do the same continue to the present. Three claimants to the title “third way” warrant particular consideration: redistributionist approaches, economic personalism, and liberation theology. The redistributionist approach encapsulates several distinct movements that developed in the early twentieth century but which continue to have varying degrees of influence today. Common among those I am including under the redistributionist approach is prioritization on distributive justice as a central means of transforming the economy and an emphasis on practical efforts to secure such justice. Two significant movements that fit into this category are the Focolare movement and distributism.

The Focolare movement began in the city of Trent in Italy during World War II when a small group of individuals led by Chiara Lubich and desiring to help those who were suffering as a result of recurring bombings formed a community intent on

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<sup>80</sup> For a helpful summary of Catholic social teaching on the economy, see Bernard V. Brady, *Essential Catholic Social Thought* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008).

<sup>81</sup> It is debated whether the encyclicals tend to favor a certain variety of capitalism against a harsh version of *laissez-faire*, or whether the encyclicals are critical of all forms of capitalism. For present purposes, I offer the weaker of the two options, though I suspect the stronger is more accurate in various specific documents.

distributing goods to aid the needy.<sup>82</sup> The movement, whose name is derived from the Italian word for “hearth,” developed initially through decentralized efforts to establish a community that extended to all those in need, welcoming them as if into a single home. Two practices sustained this passion in the early Focolare movement. Some community members named the focalarini pledged all their salaries, property, and future earnings to a community fund that would be distributed to those in need. Others gave periodically without pledging everything, often through the annual process known as “bundling” where unneeded possessions were put into a community pile to be redistributed to those with need.<sup>83</sup> This economic redistribution was later augmented with efforts to help those who were not poor through counseling, religious instruction, and other services, but redistribution as a basis of economic justice remains central to the identity of the Focolare movement.<sup>84</sup>

In 1991 the Economy of Communion (EOC), a significant new Focolare business project on economic justice through redistribution, was launched as a result of a speech given by Lubich. By 2006, 753 businesses were participating in the project across several continents. Profits from EOC businesses are divided in thirds, with one third going to help those in need through Focolare redistribution efforts, another third being reinvested in the business to ensure stable growth, and a final third funding educational structures to advance the culture of giving that the EOC was founded on.<sup>85</sup> In addition, EOC corporations often implement pay or benefits increases, apprenticeships for the poor or

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<sup>82</sup> Chiara Lubich, who became the movement’s leader at its inception and remained so throughout her life, records this development briefly in: Chiara Lubich, *That All Men Be One: Origins and Life of the Focolare Movement* (New York: New City Press, 1969).

<sup>83</sup> Gold, *Horizons*, 73-4. cf. Lubich, *One*, 55.

<sup>84</sup> Lubich, *One*, 53. Lubich summarizes the group’s function as “bringing about the conversion of individuals.” Ibid., 74.

<sup>85</sup> Gold, *Horizons*, 88-89.



disabled, and participative management strategies, each of which effectively redistribute wealth, power, and opportunities.<sup>86</sup> This entire project sees itself as a third way rooted in a Trinitarian theology; a Focolare spirituality of God's perichoresis, kenosis, and agapic self-giving forms the basis of the Focolare efforts.<sup>87</sup>

Distributism emerged a century ago largely through the efforts of G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc.<sup>88</sup> Recent efforts have re-invigorated the earlier movement, updating its ideas and providing a backing in economic theory.<sup>89</sup> Perhaps most notable in this regard is the work of John Médaille, whose main insights can be summarized with his claim that, "The simplest way to overcome the opposition between capital and labor is simply to dissolve the difference between the two, to make the workers the owners of the capital they create."<sup>90</sup> Médaille suggests that this redistribution (or, rather, re-thinking of distributive justice) will also bring about an equilibrium that avoids prolonged recessions because consumption and profits will balance in ways that are not possible when a few wealthy elites control more profit than they could possibly use up through consumption.<sup>91</sup> Médaille identifies the central element in the distributist platform to be re-moralizing the

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 136-140.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 56-7.

<sup>88</sup> See especially: Hilaire Belloc, *An Essay on the Restoration of Property* (London: The Distributist League, 1936).

<sup>89</sup> A recent anthology in distributist thought shows that the movement still has vigor: Tobias J. Lanz, *Beyond Capitalism and Socialism: A New Statement of an Old Ideal* (Norfolk, VA: IHS Press, 2008). See also recent anthologies of older distributist texts edited by John Sharpe: John Sharpe, ed. *Distributist Perspectives, Vol. 1: Essays on the Economics of Justice and Charity* (Norfolk, VA: IHS Press, 2004); John Sharpe, ed. *Distributist Perspectives, Vol. 2: Essays on the Economics of Justice and Charity* (Norfolk, VA: IHS Press, 2008). In certain respects the recent work of John D. Mueller also fits in this category, given his emphasis on distributive justice. Mueller's work fits in certain other respects with personalist economics. I have chosen with some difficulty to include him with the personalists. See Mueller, *Redeeming*.

<sup>90</sup> John C. Médaille, *Toward a Truly Free Market: A Distributist Perspective on the Role of Government, Taxes, Health Care, Deficits, and More* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2010), 135.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 53-4, 137.

market by making concerns of distributive justice central.<sup>92</sup> This plan does not require redistribution through government intervention; rather, Médaille suggests that government intervention is what has allowed such disparities to arise.<sup>93</sup> Like the Focolare movement, distributism sees itself as validated through the practical grassroots successes of corporations following a distributist mindset. The Spanish Mondragón Cooperative Corporation, a multi-national corporation with \$33 billion in assets with 80% of the employees being owners, is the most notable example of success from corporations adopting a distributist mindset.<sup>94</sup>

What the Focolare movement and distributism demonstrate for our present purposes is that alternative formulations of economic firms are possible. Further, the authors in the redistributionist approach all emphasize that the economy can operate in an unjust way contrary to any possible divine action (for “God is not unjust” – Heb. 6:10), but that humans can also contribute to more just forms of economic interaction. Each of these claims suggest further need to explore whether and how God acts through the economy and how human actions can resist or participate in such divine intentions. Further, the focolare movement’s explicit appeal to the Trinity as a means of justifying the movement reveals the manner in which the movement understands God to be actively working in its development.

Economic personalism is another significant and predominantly Catholic foray into theological economics, but with slightly different emphases than those the redistributionist approach, perhaps in part due to the significant role that professional

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 239-240.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 233-4.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 224-6.

economists have played in the development of this approach.<sup>95</sup> In the words of economic personalist Edward O'Boyle, personalist economics is "the most advanced thinking about economic affairs from the perspective of Catholic social thought in its more than 100-year history of development."<sup>96</sup> The point is granted with respect to economic models (though not to philosophy and theology) given the extensive efforts to redevelop economic theory from a more robust notion of the economic agent as person instead of as individualistic *homo economicus*.<sup>97</sup> Here the idea of a person is drawn from philosophical personalism, particularly from the work of Emmanuel Mounier, with Karol Wojtyla also quite significant.<sup>98</sup> A modified concept of the economic agent that considers motives beyond self-interested utility maximization can be the basis of an economic theory that is,

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<sup>95</sup> See particularly Danner, *Economic Person* and Edward J. O'Boyle, *Personalist Economics: Moral Convictions, Economic Realities, and Social Action* (Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic, 1998). Economists also made significant contributions to the *Foundations of Economic Personalism* series: Gregory R. Beabout, et. al., *Beyond Self-Interest: A Personalist Approach to Human Action* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002); Patricia Donohue-White, et. al., *Human Nature and the Discipline of Economics: Personalist Anthropology and Economic Methodology* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002); Anthony J. Santelli, Jr., et. al., *The Free Person and the Free Economy: A Personalist View of Market Economics* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002). While not fully within the economic personalism camp, recent work by economist John D. Mueller partly depends upon distinctions between individuals and persons that echo the project of economic personalism. Mueller, *Redeeming*, 128-129. A certain interpretation of the French economist François Perroux can situate his work as a close partner with economic personalism. See Bertrand Rossert, "Peut-on mettre le christianisme en équations? Le dilemme de François Perroux," in *Les chrétiens et l'économie: Colloque de l'Association française d'histoire religieuse contemporaine* (Paris: Éditions du Centurion, 1991), 205-232. I am only aware of one book in this tradition written entirely by a non-economist: Richard C. Bayer, *Capitalism and Christianity: The Possibility of Christian Personalism* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1999).

<sup>96</sup> O'Boyle, *Personalist Economics*, 4.

<sup>97</sup> Thus, O'Boyle posits a contrast between *homo economicus* and *homo sovieticus* as two dangerous theories of human nature that represent individualistic capitalism and collectivistic communism, respectively, instead advocating *homo-socioeconomicus* as the basis of a third way consonant with the encyclical tradition. O'Boyle, *Personalist Economics*, 9; Edward J. O'Boyle, "Requiem for *Homo Economicus*," *Journal of Markets & Morality*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Fall 2007): 321-337. See also Donohue-White, *Human Nature*, 73; Beabout, *Self-Interest*, 104.

<sup>98</sup> Danner, *Economic Person*, xiii, 50; Donohue-White, *Human Nature*, 41; Santelli, *Free Person*, 5; Beabout, *Self-Interest*, 44-65.

quoting Peter Danner, “both more humane and more realistic.”<sup>99</sup> The emphasis on realistic models is quite important for many economic personalists, with improved predictive abilities often an explicit goal.<sup>100</sup> The economic personalist approach can thus be summarized as an approach applying personalist philosophy to economic models and theories in an attempt to develop models and theories that can better predict human action through recognition of the moral dimensions of the human person. While various economic personalists reference aspects of the personalist philosophies of Wojtyla and others that suggest the economy may have a formative role on humans,<sup>101</sup> so far the authors in this approach have done little to explore the nature of such formation to any degree that may be helpful to our questions at hand concerning how God can work through the economy, or how humans can fail to participate in such action. This project therefore has the potential to expand the scope of the work done by personalist thinkers insofar as it, like the personalists, will seek to extensively engage economic models.

Liberation theology is perhaps the most famous of the three main contemporary Roman Catholic perspectives on theology and economics. This theological approach arose from a number of Latin American theologians in the nineteen sixties and seventies,

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<sup>99</sup> Danner, *Economic Person*, 57.

<sup>100</sup> Beabout, *Self-Interest*, 3, 12, 104. Donohue-White, *Human Nature*, 60, 94. Mueller, whose affinities with economic personalism are noted above, writes about “a crisis in ‘positive analysis’” and “the great trouble neoclassical economic theory has in providing an accurate description of reality.” He believes this is a result of failing to have an equation to balance final distribution, a concern arising for economic agents who view persons as an end and not merely a means. Mueller, *Redeeming*, 175.

<sup>101</sup> Beabout et. al. describe how Wojtyla claims that “every human action also has the effect of objectively forming the person doing the action.” Beabout, *Self-Interest*, 57. Similarly, passing reference is made to Wojtyla’s claim that participation contributes to the maturing of a person. Donohue-White, *Human Nature*, 41. Martin Buber, whose philosophy is less influential overall on the group, is elsewhere shown to teach that repeated exposure to an I-it relationship fundamentally changes the I. Donohue-White, *Human Nature*, 41.

continuing into the present.<sup>102</sup> Resisting the (at that time) dominant Christendom model of political theology because of violence by totalitarian regimes, governmental exploitation of indigenous populations, and extreme poverty that was attributed to government corruption and exploitation by the developed nations, Liberation theology instead sought a radical change, liberation instead of development.<sup>103</sup> To accomplish this change, theology must be understood as “critical reflection on historical praxis,”<sup>104</sup> to use Gustavo Gutiérrez’s famous words, so that practice to some degree determines Christianity’s truth<sup>105</sup> and so that, to cite Clodovis Boff, “faith is first and foremost, although not exclusively, *orthopraxis*.”<sup>106</sup> What praxis do the liberation theologians advocate? According to Ignacio Ellacuría, theology must be concerned with the task of taking the crucified people down from the cross.<sup>107</sup> Particularly, theologians must be attentive to the ways that macroeconomic structures trap the poor in poverty and to the

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<sup>102</sup> Notable are Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988); Jon Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator: A Historical-theological Reading of Jesus of Nazareth* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1993); Juan L. Segundo, *Liberation from Theology*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996); Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis: Epistemological Foundations* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009); Franz J. Hinkelammert, *The Ideological Weapons of Death: A Theological Critique of Capitalism*, trans. Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986).

<sup>103</sup> Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, 27.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>105</sup> Leonardo Boff, *Faith on the Edge: Religion and Marginalized Existence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 5. Clodovis Boff, Leonardo’s brother, helpfully qualifies this statement by stating that social outcomes do not determine the quality of a theology. Rather, theology’s own “epistemological perimeter” must determine its truth, while theology’s epistemological conclusions still remain dependent upon a practical-functional doing of theology in important ways. For C. Boff, the most important way epistemological conclusions depend on theological praxis is theology’s dependence on a socio-analytic mediation through which social sciences provide the raw data of political and economic praxis to be used by political theology. Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis*, 15-16, 31.

<sup>106</sup> Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis*, 37.

<sup>107</sup> Ignacio Ellacuría, “The Crucified People,” trans. Phillip Berryman and Robert R. Barr, in *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts in Liberation Theology*, ed. Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), 580-603. The phrase has also been particularly important in the theology of Jon Sobrino. See especially Jon Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator*, trans. Paul Burns (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 48, 208, 222, etc.

ways that the international political system buttresses violent Latin American regimes. It must proclaim a theology that is both informed by the experiences of those who suffer and insistent on the need to end such suffering in part through the elimination of ideology.

The two emphases of liberation theology just mentioned, being shaped by the experience of suffering and acting in solidarity with those who suffer toward the elimination of such suffering,<sup>108</sup> relate directly to the questions of how God is working through the economy and how human beings can resist or cooperate with this divine action. The experience of encountering the poor serves as the basis of a powerful spirituality of liberation, something that has been an important part of the project of liberation theology since its inception<sup>109</sup> despite criticism of an increasing emphasis on popular spirituality by some important liberation theologians.<sup>110</sup> The spirituality of liberation insists that political and economic liberations “are the vehicles of spiritual liberation itself,”<sup>111</sup> a practice that “brings the Christian face to face with ultimate realities”<sup>112</sup> so that, when one responds to such ultimate realities in honesty and

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<sup>108</sup> Here “solidarity” is a key word. Liberation theology consistently recognizes that the poor must be agents of their own liberation, not just beneficiaries of aid from the rich or powerful.

<sup>109</sup> Gutiérrez writes in *A Theology of Liberation*, which is generally recognized as one of the first major works in liberation theology, that we need a “spirituality of liberation.” Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, 136, 204.

<sup>110</sup> Juan Luis Segundo sees Gutiérrez’s and L. Boff’s later work as part of a second line of liberation theology that tries to synthesize popular religion with the liberation movement. Segundo is skeptical of the power of the poor, and thinks a de-emphasis of a critique of ideology is a mistaken move. He sees Gutiérrez’s later work as “not even by a long shot... of the same intellectual quality that characterized *A Theology of Liberation*.” Juan Luis Segundo, *Signs of the Times: Theological Reflections*, ed. Alfred T. Hennelly, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), 85-7, 76.

<sup>111</sup> Leonardo Boff, *Faith*, 166.

<sup>112</sup> Jon Sobrino, *Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness*, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), 30.

faithfulness, the encounter with the poor can “mediate the otherness of God.”<sup>113</sup>

Liberation theology is clear: To encounter God’s activity in the economy, we must encounter God’s activity on behalf of and through the poor. Of equal importance for our line of enquiry is liberation theology’s emphasis on praxis.<sup>114</sup> God acts in history for the liberation of the oppressed, and calls the Church to join in such action.

Like the previous two approaches, liberation theology claims for itself a “third way” status, rejecting the exploitations of capitalism, and the false collectivism of Marxism.<sup>115</sup> However, many proponents of liberation theology are dependent upon certain Marxist economic conclusions like dependency theory, which suggests that underdeveloped nations are struggling economically as a result of the way that the international economic system forces them to be dependent upon exploitative wealthy nations.<sup>116</sup> Reliance on dependency theory and other aspects of Marxist economic analysis, while perhaps necessary given the generally Marxist milieu in which these

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>114</sup> Praxis is used in a range of distinct technical senses among various liberation theologians, but at present the distinctions in precise meaning are less significant than the general consensus on the need to focus on action under some definition. For a full analysis of the different ways that praxis is used in liberation theology consider: John J. Markey, "Praxis in Liberation Theology: Some Clarifications," *Missiology* 23.2 (April 1, 1995): 179-195.

<sup>115</sup> Thus, Leonardo Boff explains that “classical Marxism” is guilty of “sociologism,” or the reduction of economic analysis to the exclusion of the “irreducible element in religion” of “the encounter of the human being with the Absolute.” Leonardo Boff, *Faith*, 34.

<sup>116</sup> Dependency theory arises early in the movement, and is particularly important for Gutiérrez’s early work. Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, 86-88. For a strong criticism of the validity of dependency theory and liberation theology’s use of it, see: Joseph Ramos, “Dependency and development: An Attempt to Clarify the Issues,” in *Liberation South, Liberation North*, ed. Michael Novak (Washington, DC: American Interprise Institute, 1981), 61-67; Joseph Ramos, “Reflections on Gustavo Gutierrez’s Theology of Liberation,” in *Liberation South, Liberation North*, ed. Michael Novak (Washington, DC: American Interprise Institute, 1981), pp. 50-61. For a discussion of how certain liberation theologians were able to overcome a reliance on dependency theory while retaining their initial emphasis on praxis, see Jung Mo Sung, *Desire, Market, and Religion* (London, SCM Press, 2007), 111-115.

theologians were writing,<sup>117</sup> resulted in significant criticism from ecclesiastical authorities<sup>118</sup> despite protestations that Marxist philosophy and atheism was rejected while Marxist raw economic data was retained.<sup>119</sup> Such debates over Marxism can obscure the liberationist claim that praxis (even if praxis is understood in a Marxist fashion) is the first moment in theology, the best means of participating in the divine life, and that certain concrete economic practices participate in the divine act of liberation, while certain other concrete economic practices do not. Here my hypothesis is laid out in bold: certain economic actions by humans put out the Spirit's fire, while others participate in God's redemptive act of liberation.

### *Theology Utilizing Other Methods*

Two common approaches tend to utilize the methods and conclusions of other social sciences in reaching their conclusions. The economics as religion approach takes on an anthropological slant by appealing to a broad conception of "religion" and trying to fit economics within this definition, and a sociology of religion approach draws on sociological analysis to explore capitalism's influence on religious beliefs. Each approach points to significant ways that the economy can shape religious beliefs and practices.

Unlike the re-imagining approach, the economics as religion approach tends to emphasize the way that economic processes influence religious experiences, rather than how theological views of the world may potentially shape economic processes. I include

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<sup>117</sup> Phillip Berryman, *Liberation Theology: Essential Facts about the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America and Beyond* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 139.

<sup>118</sup> For example: Pedro Arrupe, "Marxist Analysis by Christians," in *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, ed. and trans. Alfred T. Hennelly (Maryknoll, NY: 1990), 307-313; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation,'" in *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, ed. and trans. Alfred T. Hennelly (Maryknoll, NY: 1990), 393-414.

<sup>119</sup> Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis*, 55; Leonardo Boff, *Faith*, 69.



a range of authors including Robert Nelson, Joerg Rieger, and Jung Mo Sung into the economics as religion approach. Despite differences in content, in terms of formal approach each draws on a broad definition of “religion” to show how economics fits these categories. For Sung, a religion is characterized by the basic elements of paradise, original sin, and a means of entering paradise.<sup>120</sup> Economics rests on a number of unproven assumptions that are validated through myth.<sup>121</sup> In this case, capitalism has re-located paradise as a future state of perfection obtainable through technological and economic growth.<sup>122</sup> Market intervention is seen as the original sin, where good intentions actually derail economic progress. The sufferings of the poor are construed as necessary sacrifices, a temporary step toward a future state of global prosperity.<sup>123</sup> Economics adopts a “mythico-religious” dynamic because it “assumes a faith in a... supra-human law of history to enhance such a passage.”<sup>124</sup> When the progress of history does not appear to be approaching the paradisiacal future state, various “priests” of the market must restore our faith in this supra-human law of progress to save our consciences from the recognition that the sacrifice of the poor was not for a higher end.<sup>125</sup> Drawing on Sung’s arguments, Joerg Rieger suggests that there is a bi-directional influence between religious and economic institutions. “Oracles” of the market (Rieger’s equivalent to Sung’s “priests”) are more effective in promoting a version of “market fundamentalism” in contexts where religious practitioners have been taught not to question religious

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<sup>120</sup> Sung, *Desire*, 12.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 15-18.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 14. Rieger describes this language as an emphasis on “transcendent realities.”

Joerg Rieger, *No Rising Tide: Theology, Economics, and the Future* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 69.

<sup>125</sup> Sung, *Desire*, 19.

authorities.<sup>126</sup> Conversely, market fundamentalism's religious nature can transform religious ideas of God in ways mirroring market and corporate ideals.<sup>127</sup>

Economist Robert Nelson reaches similar conclusions to theologians Sung and Rieger. He too suggests economics has a fundamentally religious nature insofar as it offers an "alternative vision of the 'ultimate values' or 'ultimate reality.'"<sup>128</sup> Nelson points to a wide range of evidence to support his claim, including quasi-religious hopes in Marx and Keynes for a final stage of history filled with economic abundance,<sup>129</sup> Paul Samuelson's appeal to a tautological "market mechanism" that lacked a scientific foundation to the exclusion of other considerations as if on religious faith,<sup>130</sup> and to Chicago economist Harry Johnson's self description of his economic work as "missionary" in nature.<sup>131</sup> Ultimately, concludes Nelson, the success of many economists depends primarily upon "the overall quality of their artistic performance."<sup>132</sup> Nelson shares with Rieger and Sung a strategy of offering a broad definition of religion in general (non-scientific/artistic efforts to describe ultimate values and reality) which can then appropriately be applied to economics.

The economics as religion approach is less obviously related to the question of divine action, a fact stemming partly from an essentialist account of religion that may be untenable. Each author posits core elements shared by all religions and then attempts to show how economics shares the same core elements. Though none make any specific notion of a deity or of divine action central to the essence of religion, the extreme variety

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<sup>126</sup> Rieger, *Rising Tide*, 10, 14-15.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 79-80.

<sup>128</sup> Nelson, *Religion*, 23.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

of phenomena falling under the category of religion makes virtually any essentialist account a simplification of matters (though for this approaches' purposes, often a helpful one). That being said, given the contestability of what counts as religion, it would do little harm to the broader projects of authors like Rieger, Sung, and Nelson to reinterpret their essential categories so that religions are said either to arise as a result of divine action or to mimic such action. In other words, because there is no undisputed "essence" of religion, additional elements can potentially be imported into the proposed essences put forward by these authors without any clear basis for prohibiting such expansion. Such supplementation would simply arise from another subjective, contestable perspective about what constitutes religion. A Christian who understands Christianity to be a religion precisely because it is a response to a perceived divine action could interpret other religions on the basis of divine action with equal plausibility and subjectivity to Rieger's, Sung's, or Nelson's contestable claims to identify the essence of religion. All such essentialist accounts of religion face similar counter examples and debates over the centrality of certain religious motifs vis-à-vis others. Thus, a theologian concerned with divine action can supplement Sung's concerns over the sacrifice of the poor with the claim that this is a problematic and idolatrous attempt to replace the divinely ordained and right sacrifice provided through divine action without undermining Sung's conclusions, provided that the addition of talk about divine action does not obscure the overriding concern for injustice done to the poor. Therefore, while the economics as religion approach does not require any consideration of divine action or of human resistance to such action, its conclusions can be easily adapted to such concerns. In fact,

from a certain subjective theological standpoint, such adaptation would strengthen the argument as a whole by better representing the essence of true religion.

Vincent Miller and Bruce Rittenhouse exemplify the sociology of religion approach, deploying sociological arguments coupled with theological insights to critique consumerism. Miller argues that ideological critiques of consumerism fall short because they ignore the non-intentional aspects of consumerism and because capitalist societies are able to commodify dissent in a way that actually reinforces the basic problem.<sup>133</sup> Drawing on a wide range of cultural critics, sociologists, and economists,<sup>134</sup> Miller suggests that a consumer culture is one in which “elements of culture are readily commodified.”<sup>135</sup> Consumerism demands an ever-increasing amount of goods, but makes these goods interchangeable and so hollowed out.<sup>136</sup> Miller identifies a wide variety of modern religious phenomena ranging from pop cultural elements like *Touched by an Angel* to the academic theologies of Karl Rahner and Paul Tillich that he sees fitting this consumeristic commodification. In order to overcome these tendencies, economic agents must be re-situated in the economy and the religious community in roles that exceed that of consumer by becoming involved with production processes, by reconnecting commodities to their production process, and by re-embedding religious practices and doctrines in communities and traditions.<sup>137</sup>

Bruce Rittenhouse criticizes prior approaches to consumerism (including Miller’s) for being inadequately empirical and for failing to recognize the fundamentally religious

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<sup>133</sup> Vincent J. Miller, *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 18.

<sup>134</sup> Miller particularly draws on Henri Lefebvre, Guy Debord, Jean Baudrillard, Karl Marx, and Frederic Jameson.

<sup>135</sup> Vincent Miller, *Consuming*, 72.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 184, 189, 195.

motivation behind consumerism.<sup>138</sup> He surveys a number of existing critiques of consumerism put forward by theologians and by sociologists and then demonstrates that the empirical data does not fit well with any existing proposals.<sup>139</sup> For example, most consumerism theories assume that consumerism is not a problem for the lowest economic demographics, which is demonstrably not the case.<sup>140</sup> Furthermore, the presence of consumeristic tendencies in the upper economic classes calls into question theories that would suggest wealthy elites are using advertizing to manipulate the middle class.<sup>141</sup> Rittenhouse offers a different explanation informed by the theology of Paul Tillich, where consumerism is one possible answer to the question of human existence.<sup>142</sup> As a meaning strategy, consumerism attempts to provide a means of self-assertion against the risk of existential disappointment. Therefore, consumerism is best overcome when an alternative meaning strategy such as the one offered by Christianity is substituted in instances where the consumeristic meaning strategy fails, such as in financial crises or during health problems.<sup>143</sup> Rittenhouse argues that this existential religious explanation of consumerism better fits empirical data<sup>144</sup> while resting on solid (Tillichian) theological foundations.

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<sup>138</sup> Bruce P. Rittenhouse, *Shopping for Meaningful Lives: The Religious Motive of Consumerism* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 1-2.

<sup>139</sup> Rittenhouse admits that one cannot evaluate consumerism on empirical grounds alone because it is also a “creation of the human spirit.” Ibid., 93.

<sup>140</sup> At most, only the poorest half of the bottom quintile is free from clear consumeristic tendencies. Ibid., 110.

<sup>141</sup> Rittenhouse has in mind here John Kenneth Galbraith, Max Horkheimer, and Jean Baudrillard. Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 3-4, 132.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 164-5.

<sup>144</sup> For example, higher levels of consumerism were empirically observed after consumers were primed with images of death, guilt, or meaninglessness, suggesting consumption is a strategy for existential security. Ibid., 147.

With the sociology of religion approach we again see claims that particular aspects of the market can form individual economic agents in ways that either fundamentally alter their religious lives or that result in an economic substitute for religious life. Divine agency is not a focus in either of the authors mentioned above, and many views of such action are likely incommensurable with the Tillichian emphasis of Rittenhouse. Nevertheless, in identifying ways that the market can substitute for religious meaning strategies or fundamentally alter religious beliefs, the sociology of religion approach still contributes to our current lines of enquiry. If God's acts include any attempt to bring human beings into relationship with Himself, then the sociology of religion approach has identified ways that consumerism can impede such relationship by substituting an immanent meaning strategy that requires no turn to God, or by commodifying religion in such a manner that it no longer serves as a means of facilitating communion with God, but rather functions as a disembodied set of symbols linked with unintended meanings entirely unrelated to God's self-revelation. Furthermore, behind such critiques lies an implicit claim that the economy could unfold in a non-consumeristic fashion more amenable to authentic religion. In this study's terminology, a version of the market that allows for authentic religion is one that contains within it the potential of redemptive significance, which must be understood as arising from divine action.

The survey of various existing approaches to theology and economics has uncovered a wide range of pertinent data. Various approaches suggest that the economy can form human beings in ways that are contrary to Christian formation, while some hold out hope that a properly ordered market can actually contribute to the process of

transformation in various redemptively significant ways. Admittedly, many of the theologians considered do not explain their ideas in terms of divine agency, and some do not even consider the potentially transformative nature of the economy at all. Despite this, chapter 2 will suggest that there are good theological reasons to analyze the raw data provided by this survey in terms of divine action and in terms of human assent to or rejection of such divine action.

The approaches studied above will all contribute in various ways to the full development of such a theology of divine action in the economy, though the information discussed in this chapter must first go through one additional step of sorting by which the various approaches discussed above can be collected into groups more usefully deployed in analysis of specifically trinitarian divine action. The Christian God is, after all, Triune. Consequently, while this survey has provided the general contour of the sorts of questions that will be addressed in this study, and while it has demonstrated that a wide range of approaches consider the claim that God acts through the economy and that human beings can resist such action within their own perspectives, the results of this survey of existing literature is only the first step in what must be a much larger argument. We now have some basic theological data that can be evaluated and fit into a theology of divine action to provide a coherent answer to our basic research questions. Before such a task can be completed, one final preliminary point must be made.

I have gone to great lengths to identify some theological approaches that will be helpful in the subsequent chapters, but I have made almost no remarks on the pertinent economic data. It would be a mistake to believe that economic theory itself can play no role in answering the sorts of questions this project is asking. Therefore, while I began

the chapter arguing that theological questions can be brought to bear at every stage of economic analysis, I must end the chapter by insisting that such theology can never fully replace the methodology of economics, which provides a number of important tools that theologians typically cannot. Of particular importance, and the major economic focus of the duration of this project, are economic models.

While specific economic institutions, legal frameworks, and practices will all be pertinent to the analysis, it is the economic model that will be the main object of analysis moving forward. “Economists rely on models to understand economic phenomena,” writes Randall Holcombe, “a common bond that unites all economic methodology.”<sup>145</sup> If Bell raises concerns about capitalist “technologies of desire,”<sup>146</sup> his concerns must be applied to the specific technological apparatus used by economists to construct the market: models. Objections to *homo economicus* raised by so many of the approaches considered above but especially by economic personalists are objections to a certain vision of economic agents contained in standard economic models. Various economic models coupled with moral, legal, and political constraints allow policy makers to decide on the proper fences that would render a market legitimate. It is the model that allows economists to speak as priests or oracles with special insights in the way that worries the economics as religion approach. Models are used to describe the ideal practices of the market, to defend the market structures that liberation theologians consider oppressive, and to exclude or ignore the distributive justice concerns of the redistributionist approach. Despite the significance of economic models, which are the standard pedagogical tools of

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<sup>145</sup> Randall G. Holcombe, *Economic Models and Methodology* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 9.

<sup>146</sup> Bell, *Liberation Theology*, 2.



the economic classroom and the standard economic language of economic researchers,<sup>147</sup> of the approaches considered at length above, few directly engage economic models. Those approaches that do assess models and theory, like economic personalism or John Médaille's distributist analysis, have paid far less attention to the sorts of formative influences that the economy can have on human nature than have other approaches, and these formative roles are essential to determining whether/how God acts through the economy and whether/how human actions can refuse to participate in this divine action. The model is extremely important, but underexplored in regards to this question. Therefore, the economic model will be the primary economic object of this theological study. Now we must turn to the question of how it is theologically comprehensible to talk about God acting through the market or of human beings resisting such divine action.

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<sup>147</sup> Paul Samuelson makes the point that mathematical modeling is simply another language, another way of representing reality. The mathematical model is the predominant language of most modern schools of economic thought, with the notable exception of the Austrian school. Paul Samuelson, "Economic Theory and Mathematics: An Appraisal," in *The Collected Scientific Papers of Paul A. Samuelson, Vol. II* ed. Joseph E. Stiglitz (Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1966), 1751-2. I will attend to the linguistic nature of models in more depth in chapter 4.

## CHAPTER 2 – ECONOMIC ACTS OF THE TRIUNE GOD OF GRACE

Even through a providence whose main task is preservation, the world is being led forward. In other words, it is hard to distinguish between the providence that acts to preserve and the providence that acts to lead.

- Dumitru Staniloae<sup>1</sup>

The scriptures do not present God primarily as a first cause, the metaphysical ground of being, though Christians rightly can conclude that these are proper ways of speaking about God. No, the main Biblical category for divine action is that of speaking, where God's speech is "expressed supremely in the christological Word made flesh and secondarily in the canonical polyphony that in turn presents Jesus Christ," in the words of Kevin Vanhoozer.<sup>2</sup> God is the one who speaks, and creation bursts into existence (Gen. 1:3, 6, etc.). God speaks through the prophets (2 Pet. 1:21), and ultimately through his Son (Heb. 1:1-2), the Word who makes the Father known (John 1:1, 18). If speaking is the primary Biblical category for divine action, and if such speaking culminates in the incarnation of the Word, then our study of divine action cannot be divorced from study of revelation and of redemption through the Word. For this reason, I will proceed with the working hypothesis that study of divine action must explain how this action reveals the God who is Triune.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, this chapter will proceed with two emphases. First, we will explore the nature of divine action, initially taking creation as paradigmatic and therefore focusing on the God/world relation. Properly speaking, all created reality must

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<sup>1</sup> Dumitru Staniloae, *The Experience of God: Orthodox Dogmatic Theology Vol. 2 – The World: Creation and Deification*, trans. and eds. Ioan Ionita and Robert Barringer (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2000), 192.

<sup>2</sup> Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 24. See also, Henry, Carl F. H. *God, Revelation, and Authority Vol. II: God Who Speaks and Shows, Fifteen Theses, Part One*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1999), 51.

<sup>3</sup> Chapters 4-6 will connect this theology to redemption and the *ordo salutis*. This chapter will explain why revelation is connected to acts in the order of creation.

be understood as radically dependent on the continued, concurrent, sustaining action of God. When human action conforms to the divine action on which it depends, we must speak of this conformity as the result of grace and oriented toward communion with God. When human action fails to participate in divinely ordained ends, we must speak of sin. Second, we will explore the God who acts in history and is revealed in history. The Christian God is a Triune God, so this section will need to explore how God acts as Father, Son, and Spirit. The short answer to this question is that each person acts inseparably in self-revelation toward the redemption of the world brought about through the redemption of the Church, though specific acts can rightly be ascribed more fully to one particular person, either Father, Son, or Spirit. A third related task will be the focus of chapter 3: we must explore orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy as three dimensions of human transformation arising from Triune action on human beings. Only when these theological foundations are established can we move to analyze the market as a site of divine action or human failure to participate in that action

### **A Theology of Divine Action**

The act of creation is in important respects paradigmatic for all divine action. Insofar as creation is, from a creaturely perspective, the first of all divine acts, it stands as a logical precondition for all subsequent acts in the order of creation. Furthermore, insofar as God's acts of redemption bring about a "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17, Gal. 6:15), they should be interpreted as in continuity with the first creation which constituted, from a human perspective, the first divine act. Therefore, to understand God's action in the world we must first begin by attempting to understand God's relation to creation.

Among contemporary theologians, Kathryn Tanner's depiction of the God/world relation is perhaps most helpful and most theologically sound. Tanner points to two traditional Greek conceptions of transcendence. The first contrastive view understands divinity as "set off oppositionally, as a realm of eternal, changeless intelligibility, over against the world as a whole characterized by contradictory predicates."<sup>4</sup> In such non-Christian Hellenistic contexts, the more transcendent God was understood to be, the less God was thought to be engaged with the world. This view is not radical enough in its understanding of transcendence because it understands God to exist in the same domain of existence as the created order such that divine transcendence must be understood as contrasted with this created order.<sup>5</sup> Partly spurred on by post-Reformation confessional debates about free will,<sup>6</sup> this contrastive view has been predominant in modern theological thought.<sup>7</sup> Often this contrast occurs in spatial terms such that God is "above" while creatures are "below," or such that God is "outside" time while creatures are "within" it.<sup>8</sup> However, if God is Creator of the universe, including space-time, then there is a sense in which space is not real for God, and neither God nor the God/world relation can be defined in terms of space, except perhaps analogically.<sup>9</sup> At other times, such

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<sup>4</sup> Kathryn Tanner, *God and Creation in Christian Theology: Tyranny or Empowerment?* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1988), 38-40.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>6</sup> William Placher traces the "domestication" of transcendence through its reduction to contrastive terms in Lutheran synergists, Catholic Molinists, Arminians, and federal covenant theologians. William C. Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence: How Modern Thinking about God Went Wrong* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 162-3.

<sup>7</sup> A helpful reading of modern theology in light of debates surrounding transcendence and immanence is offered in Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *20<sup>th</sup> Century Theology: God and World in a Transitional Age* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1992).

<sup>8</sup> Such contrastive transcendence is often assumed but rarely argued for. One exception occurs in Klaus Kremer, *Gott und Welt in der klassischen Metaphysik: Vom Sein der 'Dinge' in Gott*. (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1969), 94-96.

<sup>9</sup> Emil Brunner understands this conclusion to not only follow philosophically from the fact that God is Creator of space-time, but also exegetically from the prohibition against idols.

contrast comes in temporal terms. Thus, Emmanuel Durand insightfully points out that both science and analytic philosophy (and even certain forms of Aristotelian philosophy) push the theology of divine action in the direction of discussions about cause and effect in a temporal sequence such that divine action must either precede or follow subsequent to a particular human action.<sup>10</sup> Such temporalizing again weakens divine transcendence, reducing God to one agent among other univocal agents sharing a common temporal sphere and a common space in a singular causal network. A radical understanding of transcendence recognizes God as Creator of all the aspects of the universe, including space and time, such that contrastive definitions that reduce transcendence to a contrastive position within a common domain are unnecessary.

Against an oppositional notion of transcendence, Tanner points to a non-contrastive understanding of transcendence that was common to a wide range of theological traditions and even to certain schools of Greek philosophical thought:

A non-contrastive transcendence of God suggests an extreme of divine involvement with the world – a divine involvement in the form of a productive agency extending to everything that is in an equally direct manner. Divine involvement with the world need be neither partial, nor mediate, nor simply formative: if divinity is not characterized by contrast with any sort of being, it may be the immediate source of being of every sort.<sup>11</sup>

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“The protest against making an image of God does not only mean that He is unlike the world, but also that He is not tied to space.” Emil Brunner, *Dogmatics: Vol. 1 – The Christian Doctrine of God*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1950), 257-8.

<sup>10</sup> Emmanuel Durand, *Évangile et Providence: Un théologie de l'action de Dieu* (Paris: Cerf, 2014), 61.

<sup>11</sup> Tanner, *God and Creation*, 46. Thomas Tracy objects to Tanner's position, arguing that God's transcendence cannot be defined in purely non-contrastive ways because at the very least there must be a contrast such as God being defined without contrast and creatures being defined through contrast. It would seem that Tracy misunderstands the object of non-contrastive claims about God. The claim is not that there is no contrast between God and creation. After all, Tracy's point is made far more simply by noting that God is God and creation is not God, a contrast. Rather, the proper claim is that transcendence is not defined in contrast to immanence, such that one must be sacrificed to obtain the other. God's being immanent in the world does not require that God sacrifice certain aspects of transcendence, nor visa versa. Thomas F. Tracy, “Divine Action, Created Causes, and Human Freedom,” in *The God Who Acts: Philosophical and*

Understood in such radical terms, God transcends the world precisely because of an ontological distinction whereby both complementary binaries such as time and space and contrastive binaries such as being and becoming or the one and the many, can only maintain their proper distinctiveness through the immediate sustaining effort of God.<sup>12</sup> Space and time do not exist because of a divine self-limitation where God is limited and thereby separated from creation,<sup>13</sup> but because the God who transcends both space and time is also radically immanent to all of space and time, providentially sustaining each instant as well as the entire expanse of the universe.<sup>14</sup> Nor is God the One opposed to the created many, because in the Triune God both unity and plurality find their perfection.<sup>15</sup> All aspects of non-divine being and existence are “in a relation of total and immediate dependence upon God.”<sup>16</sup>

A non-contrastive view of transcendence has significant implications for a theory of divine agency. Tanner suggests a “principle of direct proportion”: “The more one talks

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*Theological Explorations*, ed. Thomas F. Tracy (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 85-87.

<sup>12</sup> Colin E. Gunton, *The One, The Three, and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 161.

<sup>13</sup> Here, for example, Jürgen Moltmann’s use of *zimsum*, the self-limitation of God that gives space to creation, weakens transcendence by making God captive within a space shared with the created order. Moltmann tries to overcome this problem by positing panentheistically that this space simply is God, but such claims do not defend the notion of transcendence as much as they collapse the ontological distinction between Creator and creature. In the end, the primary difference in Moltmann’s theology between the divine works *ad intra* and the divine works *ad extra* is a difference in space. Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 86-89; cf. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 297; Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1981), 108.

<sup>14</sup> As Carl Henry explains things with clarity and brevity: “For Christian theology, divine transcendence and immanence are corollary conceptions.” Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority Vol. VI: God Who Stands and Stays, Part Two* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1999), 48.

<sup>15</sup> Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity*, trans. Zachary Hayes (New York: The Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University, 1979), II.2.

<sup>16</sup> Tanner, *God and Creation*, 84.

of the realization and perfection of created beings, the more one must speak of God's immediate creative working."<sup>17</sup> If human agency is a power, then this power is only perfected to the extent that God is immediately active within this agency. However, keeping in mind a non-contrastive view of immanence, this correspondence of divine and human agency does not suggest that the divine agency is therefore not transcendent, as if God's agency is somehow "added on" to the creature's as a supplementary contributor operative in the same way within the same common domain as the created order.<sup>18</sup>

Rather, each action must be understood as fully and entirely human when considered horizontally with only the order of creation in mind, but both the capacities and the actual act itself must also be understood as radically dependent upon the creative action of God. The claim may be put in other terms. David Burrell explains that theologians affirming non-contrastive transcendence view God as the creator not only of being, but of existence. God is radically transcendent to and immanent within activity as well as being.<sup>19</sup> This view of divine agency strives to simultaneously affirm salvation by grace alone, providence as the drive behind history, and a genuine space for human responsibility through human freedom.<sup>20</sup> Human acts are free but only insofar as they are fully dependent upon grace.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 85. Elsewhere, Tanner writes that "everything nondivine, in every respect that it is, is dependent upon God's creative activity." Kathryn Tanner, "Human Freedom, Human Sin, and God the Creator," in *The God Who Acts: Philosophical and Theological Explorations*, ed. Thomas F. Tracy (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 115.

<sup>18</sup> Tanner, *God and Creation*, 94.

<sup>19</sup> David B. Burrell, "Human Freedom in the Context of Creation," in *The God Who Acts: Philosophical and Theological Explorations*, ed. Thomas F. Tracy (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 103-109.

<sup>20</sup> These points are summarized quite nicely by Alexander Jensen, who advocates a similar view of transcendence and divine agency that is in certain respects indebted to Tanner. Alexander S. Jensen, *Divine Providence and Human Agency: Trinity, Creation and Freedom* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 111.

The perspective Tanner advocates has a long history as the doctrine of concurrence (*concursum*), beginning with certain scriptural sensibilities.<sup>21</sup> As far back as the narrative accounts of the Old Testament, God's omnipotence was not seen as something in conflict with human freedom. Thus, when God used the nations to punish Israel or Judah (for example, Hab. 1:5-11), divine omnipotence was not seen to conflict with human responsibility.<sup>22</sup> The Old Testament depicts a God who is somehow above a creation (Eccles. 5:2, Isa. 55:9) that is utterly dependent upon Him (Job 12:10, Ps. 104:29-30). This transcendence does not preclude the immanence of God, who not only has written every day of our lives in his book (Ps. 139:16), but who establishes our very steps (Prov. 16:9). Despite this strong view of providence, the accounts still depict humans as responsible to freely live in a way that glorifies God. Yet, God acts through these free acts, be it in Pharaoh hardening his heart while God also hardened his heart (Ex. 8:32, 9:12), or the Lord's use of Joshua's brothers' intention to betray Joshua as part of a divine intention for good (Gen. 50:20). This Old Testament pattern is continued in New Testament didactic passages. The same transcendent God who has only been seen by the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him (John 1:18) is also the God who is "not far from each one of us" and in whom "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:27-28). Particularly significant here is the Pauline account of salvation, where human beings are urged to have faith, while this faith is somehow depicted as radically dependent, not "our own doing" but the "gift of God" (Eph. 2:8-10), the God "who accomplishes all things according to the council of his will" (Eph. 1:11). In regard to sanctification, Paul can speak of God working through his own toil: "For this I toil,

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<sup>21</sup> Of course, Tanner is well aware of this. Tanner, *God in Creation*, 93.

<sup>22</sup> Jensen, *Providence*, 116.



struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works in me” (Col. 1:29). In the Bible we see an inchoate view of non-contrastive divine action that is simultaneous with human action.

As systematic theology developed through the centuries, a philosophically informed account of these patterns emerged. The doctrine of concurrence was already prevalent in medieval thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas<sup>23</sup> (though for present purposes I will focus on the Reformed tradition for the methodological reasons noted in the introduction). Simply put, concurrence is the co-operation of God’s power with all created powers in every step of activity in such a way that these powers are not reduced to mere occasions of divine action but retain a status as genuine, free powers.<sup>24</sup> The doctrine allowed Calvin to affirm both providence and free will, though we must keep in mind that he did not consider the will free to do good due to its bondage to sin. He writes, “The Lord has furnished men with the arts of deliberation and causation, that they may employ them in subservience to his providence, in the preservation of their life.”<sup>25</sup> The theme is muted in Calvin,<sup>26</sup> but is far clearer in other early Reformed theologians like Girolamo Zanchi and Zacharias Ursinus.<sup>27</sup> Ursinus teaches that all things are necessary

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<sup>23</sup> For example see: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles. Book III: Providence – Part I*, trans. Vernon J. Bourke (Garden City, NY: Hanover House, 1956), §69-70.

<sup>24</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), 171-3.

<sup>25</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), I.17.4.

<sup>26</sup> Here Jensen overstates the case in suggesting Calvin eliminates any roll for freedom through appeal to providence, and for treating Calvinism instead of the more inclusive Reformed theology. Jensen, *Providence*, 47, 97. William Placher is far more accurate in his reading when he suggests that Calvin “believed that God, on one order of efficacy, is the sustaining cause of every event, while at the same time each event has its own cause.” Placher, *Transcendence*, 122.

<sup>27</sup> “Scientia et voluntate nihil contingit in mundo, omnia fiant necessario; respectu tamen nostri causarumque secundarum non omnia necessario, sed quamplurima contingenter fieri et evenire.” Girolamo Zanchi, *De religione Christiana fides* ed. Luca Baschera and Christian Moser (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 6.i.

from the divine perspective, but also contingent “as far as we are concerned who are ignorant of their true causes.”<sup>28</sup> Against a claim that providence undermines liberty, he writes:

Contingency is the order between a changeable cause and its effect: just as necessity is the order between a necessary cause and its effect.... But the same effect may proceed from a changeable and necessary cause in different respects, as is the case with all things which God does through his creatures; of which both God and his creatures are the cause. Thus in respect to God there is an unchangeable order between cause and effect; but in respect to creatures, there is a changeable order between the cause and the same effect.<sup>29</sup>

This view of concurrent human and divine action, called either concurrence or meticulous providence, was prevalent in a number of Reformed theologians up until the modern period.<sup>30</sup>

It must be admitted that certain aspects of Reformed theology began to lose the non-contrastive view of transcendence advocated by Tanner that was the basis of the doctrine of concurrence. For example, Ursinus introduced the notion of a covenant as a bilateral agreement. When coupled with his claim that there was both a covenant of works and a covenant of grace, the bilateral nature of the covenant of grace led to debates over which part of faith was a human contribution and which part was divine.<sup>31</sup> Debates of this sort often weakened transcendence and began to claim that whatever is attributable to a divine contribution reduces human contribution, rather than granting that faith is both fully a free human act and fully a divine act, where the human act is entirely dependent upon God’s grace. Perhaps the most notable example of this perspective is evident in the

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<sup>28</sup> Zacharias Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism* trans. G.W. Williard (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1985), 154.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 161-2.

<sup>30</sup> Oliver D. Crisp, *Retrieving Doctrine: Essays in Reformed Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2010), 13.

<sup>31</sup> Placher, *Transcendence*, 156.

debate over Arminianism. Ultimately, debates between Reformed and Arminian theology that ignored non-contrastive transcendence wound up with disparate views of concurrence. Reformed theology ultimately identified concurrence with God causing the secondary cause in a way that diminished human freedom, while the Arminian position spoke of “passive” concurrence that diminished God’s agency.<sup>32</sup> Such trends were not universal. In the twentieth century, for example, Herman Bavinck argued that Pelagianism tries to drive a wedge between the natural capacity to do something, and the will to do something. For Pelagians, God’s providence relates to the capacity/natural world, but not to the will/moral world.

One cannot designate a point in creation where the counsel and governance of God and the independent will and action of humans begin... If God and his human creatures can only be conceived as competitors, and if the one can only retain his freedom and independence at the expense of the other, then God has to be increasingly restricted both in knowledge and in will. Pelagianism, accordingly, banishes God from his world. It leads both to Deism and atheism and enthrones human arbitrariness and folly. Therefore, the solution of the problem must be sought in another direction. It must be sought in the fact that God – because he is God and the universe is his creation – by the infinitely majestic activity of his knowing and willing, does not destroy but instead creates and maintains the freedom and independence of his creatures.<sup>33</sup>

The argument, which could also be applied in a limited sense to Arminianism,<sup>34</sup> demonstrates a continued Reformed concern for presenting God’s transcendence in a non-contrastive way such that human and divine agency can be concurrent.

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<sup>32</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1994), 117.

<sup>33</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics Vol. 2: God and Creation*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 376-7.

<sup>34</sup> Richard Muller surveys Arminius’ teaching on concurrence and concludes that he takes a decidedly molinist position where there must be a “balance of coordination of primary and secondary causes.” This balance must ensure that “divine determination must be somehow limited or withheld if there is to be any freedom and contingency in the created order.” Here one sees that for God to be transcendent to an act, God must be less immanent within it. Richard A. Muller, *God, Creation and Providence in the Thought of Jacob Arminius: Sources and Directions of Scholastic Protestantism in the Era of Early Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1991), 265-6.

The historical debate between Reformed scholastics and Jesuit theologians again demonstrates the potential misunderstandings of concurrence where both sides began to lose the strongest sense of coincident divine and human action. Following Francisco Suárez, certain theologians affirmed “simultaneous concurrence,” where both the human will and the divine will contribute to the outcome of any choice but the human will itself is not affected by the divine. Against this, Reformed theologians defended “previous concurrence,” where God affects the human will through prior action as well as determining the outcome of any choice.<sup>35</sup> Both sides move away from non-contrastive transcendence. If divine transcendence does not require a corresponding reduction in immanence, then God’s transcendence of particular human exercise of the will need not entail that God is not somehow also operative within that choice, against Suárez and his companions. However, the proper way to reject this interpretation of concurrence is not to encapsulate God and creatures in a common chain of causes and effects, so that God must act as a temporally prior cause to any secondary human causes. Here a common Reformed scholastic position is mistaken. A more proper understanding of concurrence can appeal to supervenience as a basis for simultaneity that still identifies human free action as radically dependent upon divine grace in terms of both human capacities and the actual human acts chosen.

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<sup>35</sup> The debate is helpfully summarized in J. Martin Bac, *Perfect Will Theology: Divine Agency in Reformed Scholasticism as against Suárez, Episcopius, Descartes, and Spinoza* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 449-50. What is in mind here is the problem of reducing divine action in such a way that it is contained fully within the same causal order as that within which human beings operate. I do not intend to deny that God acts in a previous way in the sense that the conditions for the human action were already provided by God. Nor is it to deny that the decree of grace preceded the creation of the world. Karl Barth *Church Dogmatics III/3 – The Doctrine of Creation*, ed. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. G.W. Bromiley and R.J. Ehrlich (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960), 119-120.

Frank Kirkpatrick offers a helpful contribution here in his recent philosophical exploration of divine action.<sup>36</sup> With an eye to naturalist criticism of any form of divine action, Kirkpatrick argues that it is mistaken to analyze divine action in terms of an intervention into a chain of causes and effects. Such a perspective treats cause and effect as “primordial,” so that at its core reality is most fundamentally a matter of impersonal causes and effects. However, theism considers personal agency to be primordial, insofar as the entire chain of causal events are the result of personal agency. Personal agency is not a result of deterministic chains of cause and effect. Rather, if one affirms human free will, then one must also affirm that human persons somehow supervene upon natural causal processes such as the firing of neurons that bring about a specific voluntary motor action. To truly be free, human action is irreducible to this deterministic chain of causes and effects. Human agency is immanent in this chain of cause and effect, but this agency transcends the causal chain and is therefore irreducible to it.<sup>37</sup> If this possibility is denied, Kirkpatrick argues that there is no free will and the causal nexus is fully determinative.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, if human persons can operate through such supervenience, then we have no reason to deny the possibility that a divine person can do the same, albeit in an analogical sense.

Kirkpatrick does not apply the notion of supervenience to a non-contrastive view of transcendence,<sup>39</sup> but arguably in such a view God’s agency is analogous to human

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<sup>36</sup> Frank G. Kirkpatrick, *The Mystery and Agency of God: Divine Being and Action in the World*. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>39</sup> Despite his insight into divine agency, as a whole Kirkpatrick offers a muddled and incorrect view of the God/world relation, which he depicts as a choice between ontological monism, ontological dualism, and ontological pluralism. Kirkpatrick sides with the latter position, thereby constraining God and created beings within a common sphere that is apparently not

supervenient agency insofar as God's acts utilize a chain of causes and effects such that God remains fully immanent to this chain without thereby eliminating the transcendence of God above this causal chain. To speak in a different manner, the causal chain becomes the immanent term of the transcendent God's supervenient act. The main difference between human agency and divine is that Tanner and other advocates of non-contrastive transcendence claim that God supervenes upon all created existence, including free human actions, whereas human agents only supervene upon the biological and physical causal chains occurring within their bodies.<sup>40</sup> If supervenience is possible, as it seems an affirmation of human free will requires, then Tanner is correct in claiming that the main reasons for denying concurrence become theological rather than empirical.<sup>41</sup> As we have seen there are solid theological reasons for affirming concurrence to ensure a proper notion of transcendence.

### **Divine Action, Grace, and Revelation**

Tanner's theology of non-contrastive transcendence coupled with the doctrine of concurrence provides the foundation for a theology of divine action in the economy, but

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created by God and undermining God as the source of all being. He does not consider the classical ontologies of analogy, nor any view of transcendence similar to Tanner's. Rather, dualism comes at the complete cost of immanence, while monism comes at a complete cost of transcendence. In both cases, Kirkpatrick believes God is reduced to unknowability. This may be the case, but Kirkpatrick presents a faulty dilemma in not considering other options. See especially: *Ibid.*, 104, 106-7.

<sup>40</sup> This may be the first step (but only the first) toward a response toward the objections raised against Tanner by William Hasker on the basis of libertarian views of free will. If human agency, understood through the lens of supervenience, allows for a biological process to be simultaneously freely chosen and a determined order of causes and effects, then the possibility of something being both free and determined is open. It is not immediately obvious why divine actions supervening concurrently on human actions could not also be simultaneously free and determined. Because this study will not defend libertarian freedom, I need go no farther in engaging Hasker. For Hasker's arguments, see William Hasker, "God the Creator Good and Evil?" in *The God Who Acts: Philosophical and Theological Explorations*, ed. Thomas F. Tracy (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 137-146.

<sup>41</sup> Tanner, *God and Creation*, 89.

alone it is insufficient to fully support the present research questions. This is the case for two reasons. First, concurrence allows us to view all human actions as coincident with divine actions, but if all human action in the marketplace can equally be considered divine action in the same way, the theological claim that God acts in the market loses much of its significance. If all human action is understood as divine action in the same way, we cannot easily distinguish certain human actions as rejecting the divine offer of redemption in comparison to others yielding to God's plan. That is not to say that a theology of economics that views all human action as concurrently divine without attending to further distinctions would lose its significance entirely. One could still argue, as does Miroslav Volf, that work is better viewed through the category of co-creation than through that of vocation, insofar as human beings work together with God in all divine action, including market interactions.<sup>42</sup> One might also argue with Sergei Bulgakov that all human creativity, including economic activity, is a participation in the divine Sophia.<sup>43</sup> Each claim could no doubt bear fruit in our understanding of what we are doing in the market, but taken alone neither claim provides much insight into what it would mean for certain possible formations of the market to more easily facilitate our sanctification and the development of virtues through cooperation with the divine action.<sup>44</sup> Nor would such a view of concurrence, taken alone, explain how certain aspects

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<sup>42</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

<sup>43</sup> Sergei Bulgakov, *Philosophy of Economy: The World as Household*, trans. and ed. Catherine Evtuhov (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 145.

<sup>44</sup> Both Bulgakov and Volf are of course aware of this need. Thus, Bulgakov acknowledges that the economy is sophic in potential but not in empirical reality. Full participation in the sophic potential of the economy requires great effort. Ibid., 146-7. Similarly, Volf's project is undertaken with the intent of developing a new theology of work that will allow us to "restructure the world of work" so that we are better sanctified through work. Volf, *Work*, 76.

of the economy may transform us in redemptively significant ways while others do not. Neither claim can therefore be the basis of a theology capable of evaluating certain constructions of the market, or of proposing constructions that are superior to present market formations.

The second problem is the inverse of the first. If all human actions are so radically dependent on divine action so as to be accurately considered coincident with that divine action, how do we explain those aspects of the market that can form us in maladaptive ways? In other words, how do we explain sinful human actions? Tanner herself develops a partial answer to this question, explaining the classical notion of sin as a deprivation of being and thus not a creation of God before moving on to suggest that sin is ultimately inexplicable, though she suggests this is precisely what we would expect given that God is the explanation of all that is.<sup>45</sup> While theologically sound in its basic contours, this response is incomplete for present purposes precisely because it is unable to provide a theological apparatus by which we can distinguish between sin and concurrent action. While it may not be possible to fully explain how such sin occurs, we must at least distinguish such resistance from other concurrent divine/human actions in order to have any hope of constructing an economy that provides less opportunity for such resistance. Without such a distinction, we cannot easily aim for market constructions that lead to more positive outcomes. Furthermore, while sin is absurd, it cannot be treated as merely absurd, or else we are left unable to identify factors that are more or less likely to spur human beings on to sin. Therefore, it is necessary to augment the theology of non-contrastive transcendence and concurrence that provides a means of describing God

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<sup>45</sup> Tanner, "Human Freedom," 132-3.



working through human economic activity with a theology of grace and a theology of revelation.

We begin by rejecting certain tenets of the Barthian strand of Reformed theology. In the first volume of his *Church Dogmatics*, Barth famously criticizes the Roman Catholic *analogia entis* as the “invention of the antichrist.”<sup>46</sup> Barth is concerned to ensure that the basis of all human knowledge of God is the divine self-revelation Revealed by the Father in the Son who is the Revelation which is possessed as Revealedness of the Holy Spirit within the church. He therefore criticizes all prior categories that can be imposed onto God’s self-revelation and that would thereby distort or limit it. Constraining the basis of revelation in this manner is admirable,<sup>47</sup> but, perhaps influenced by too heavily relying on a Kierkegaardian dialectical notion of God and creation as separated by an infinite qualitative divide,<sup>48</sup> Barth fails to recognize the way that creation is ordered toward revelation, at least in his early works.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, he severs created being from God too drastically. This objection was initially raised by Hans Urs von Balthasar, who rightly noted that the incarnation “presupposes the order of creation,” as “oriented towards the Incarnation,” such that “it possesses images, analogies, and

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<sup>46</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics I/1 – The Doctrine of the Word of God*, trans. G.T. Thomason (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1936), x.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 340ff.

<sup>48</sup> Peter S. Oh, *Karl Barth's Trinitarian Theology: A Study in Karl Barth's Analogical Use of the Trinitarian Relation* (New York: T & T Clark, 2006), chapters 1-2.

<sup>49</sup> In later volumes of the *Dogmatics*, Barth can write with more nuance that history outside of the Church must be seen as in opposition to the Church, and thus not “as such Christ-occurrence,” yet even “world-occurrence outside takes place in His sphere and under His governance.” He adds, “Even in relation to what takes place without, to the history of the cosmos as it is distinct but not separate from the history of the community of Jesus Christ, there can thus be no question of the real sway of any principle independent of the God who acts and is revealed in Jesus Christ.” The act of God as revealed in Christ is thus not distinct from that God’s act in creation and providence. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV/3 – The Doctrine of Reconciliation: Second Half*, eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. G.W. Bromiley. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1962), 686-7.

dispositions that truly are presuppositions for the Incarnation.”<sup>50</sup> Human beings had to be created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:27) in order for the very Image of God to be incarnate as the man Jesus Christ (Col. 1:15). Alan Torrance strengthens the argument, suggesting that a rejection of the *analogia entis* falls subject to the same “*duplex cognitio*” of God that Barth so heavily criticized.<sup>51</sup> The *analogia entis* only counts as the superimposition of a prior category onto revelation if we divorce creation from revelation, reaffirming a two-story hierarchic antinomy of creation and divine revelation. Against this division, Torrance convincingly argues that “revelation and reconciliation are *intrinsic*, and not *extrinsic*, to God’s act of creation” such that not only is the order of creation presupposed in God’s revelatory act of incarnation in the Word (à la von Balthasar), but it is also the initial movement of a single act of divine self-revelation that is completed in the incarnation.<sup>52</sup>

This basic ordering of creation toward redemption that the *analogia entis* drives at is traditionally manifest in Reformed theology with the doctrine of common grace, which was most adeptly articulated by several Dutch and Dutch-influenced Reformed theologians of the early twentieth century. Herman Bavinck, who is particularly helpful for present purposes,<sup>53</sup> puts the point quite nicely when he writes that “special grace is

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<sup>50</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*, trans. John Drury (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 148.

<sup>51</sup> Alan J. Torrance, *Persons in Communion: Trinitarian Description and Human Participation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 62.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 64. Emphasis original.

<sup>53</sup> I choose to emphasize Bavinck’s account of common grace because his account clearly orients creation toward redemption, whereas Kuyper’s version of common grace often seemingly articulates a purely natural end for creation. As a result, Kuyper’s theology divorces the orders of creation and redemption in a similar fashion to the early theology of Karl Barth, though for very different reasons. Bavinck’s account is closer to the response given by the *nouvelle theologie*, and more appropriately orients creation toward redemption, common grace toward special grace. Jeffrey Skaff, “Common Grace and the Ends of Creation in Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck,” *Journal of Reformed Theology*, 9.1 (2015), 3-18.

encircled by common grace... the God of creation and of regeneration is one.”<sup>54</sup>

Common grace is, for Bavinck, the basis of relating nature and grace. Socinians collapse the *ordo supernaturalis* by abandoning the notion of a special grace by which God redeems the elect thereby retaining nothing but nature, claims Bavinck. Anabaptists abandon the *ordo naturalis* by denying the presence of any grace common to the world apart from the special grace of the Church.<sup>55</sup> Bavinck argues that Roman Catholics, on the other hand, maintain a stark distinction between nature and grace through the acceptance of a state of humanity *in puris naturalibus* completely divorced from grace.<sup>56</sup> Against this wide range of mistakes, Bavinck argues that the content of history is not exhausted with the history of Israel and the Church as the recipients of special grace,<sup>57</sup> but that through grace God restrains sin in creation as a whole because this creation is part of the divine plan.<sup>58</sup> Life and being itself is not “natural” but is dependent entirely upon grace.<sup>59</sup> (Note here the echoes of Tanner’s claim that every aspect of created being and existence is immediately dependent upon the continued preserving work of God.)

Ultimately, Bavinck insists that we relate nature and grace, creation and re-creation in the

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<sup>54</sup> Herman Bavinck, “Calvin and Common Grace,” in *Calvin and the Reformation*, ed. William Park Armstrong (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980), 126. A similar point is made by Abraham Kuyper: “All special grace assumes common grace.” Abraham Kuyper, *De Gemeene Gratie (Common Grace)*, Vol. I and II. In *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, ed. James D. Bratt (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 169.

<sup>55</sup> Herman Bavinck, “Common Grace,” trans. Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, *Calvin Theological Journal* 24.1 (April 1989), 53

<sup>56</sup> Bavinck, “Calvin,” 107; Bavinck, “Common Grace,” 50. This rejection of pure nature lies in the background of the idea of common grace since it first emerged in Calvin’s thought. See Paul Helm, *John Calvin’s Ideas*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 383.

<sup>57</sup> Bavinck, “Calvin,” 99.

<sup>58</sup> Bavinck, “Common Grace,” 51. Note that this does not undermine the doctrine of total depravity insofar as total depravity is not speaking of a “quantitative reduction” but rather of the contamination of all human faculties resulting in “the whole man [sic] before the face of God, man in the total orientation of his existence” facing condemnation and lacking merit apart from grace. See G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, trans. Dirk W. Jellema (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1962), 150-151.

<sup>59</sup> Bavinck, “Common Grace,” 40.

way that the Scriptures do. The first promises of grace are made to Adam and Eve and pertain to the entire human race and special grace emerges from this common grace.<sup>60</sup> The two forms of grace are fully united in Christ,<sup>61</sup> who is the pinnacle of the old creation and the firstfruits of the new creation.

Setting aside the question of whether Bavinck describes various theological alternatives with adequate accuracy, we can say that in terms of the relationship between creation and God, the distinction between common grace and special grace is attempting something very similar to what von Balthasar and other members of the *nouvelle theologie* are attempting with their version of the *analogia entis* and the nature/supernatural distinction.<sup>62</sup> Like Bavinck, the theologians of the *nouvelle theologie* reject the idea of a “pure nature” as a later invention,<sup>63</sup> instead pointing to the same fundamental ordering of the natural toward the supernatural that Barth was keen to dismiss.<sup>64</sup> However, in preferring to speak of common grace and special grace instead of nature and the supernatural, the Reformed notion offers two distinct advantages over the

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<sup>60</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics Volume 3: Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 216. For much of the tradition, especially Abraham Kuyper, common grace makes possible the actualization of special grace. See the brief discussion in Cornelis van der Kooi, “A Theology of Culture. A Critical Appraisal of Kuyper’s Doctrine of Common Grace,” in *Kuyper Reconsidered: Aspects of His Life and Work*, ed. Cornelis van der Kooi and Jan de Bruijn (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1999), 97.

<sup>61</sup> Bavinck, “Common Grace,” 64.

<sup>62</sup> This is against the claim put forward by Henri de Lubac that protestant theology is irreducibly a dualistic theology arising from a certain “bastard Augustinianism” that sees salvation only in a “complete severance between the natural and the supernatural.” Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*, trans. Lancelot C. Sheppard and Sister Elizabeth Englund (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 313.

<sup>63</sup> For example, Henri de Lubac, *Surnaturel: Études historiques* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1946), 105-6.

<sup>64</sup> This was a major concern of von Balthasar, who believed that Barth was fundamentally mistaken in his rejection of the *analogia entis* and the idea of obediential potency. Instead, von Balthasar suggested that the primary target of Barth’s criticism should be the idea of pure nature. See the summary of von Balthasar’s analysis of Barth in D. Stephen Long, *Saving Karl Barth: Hans Urs von Balthasar’s Preoccupation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014), 39-44.

*analogia entis*. First, even if a doctrine of pure nature is rejected, continuing to speak of created nature as beneficiary of common grace allows one to more firmly maintain that creation's orientation toward the regeneration made possible through special grace is entirely a result of (common) grace, avoiding the potential pitfalls of a semi-Pelagian interpretation of the way that nature possesses an aptitude for grace that can be found in certain varieties of the nature/supernatural distinction.<sup>65</sup> The language of common grace grounds any free human act which is a condition for the historical manifestation of special grace in God's concurrent gracious action with this human act, thereby preserving *sola gratia*. Second, speaking of common and special grace, or more broadly of grace and sin, rather than of nature and the supernatural, the Reformed distinction draws more attention to existence and actions than to an underlying distinction of being.<sup>66</sup> That is to say that both common grace and sin are terms that are inescapably historical, whereas nature is not. Thus, we see Reformed discussions of common grace focusing on culture, economy, art, science, and any number of other aspects of the historical development of human civilization.<sup>67</sup> Such an emphasis on history and action brings the discussion back to the question at hand.

If a non-contrastive view of transcendence and the doctrine of concurrence compel us to see all human acts as coincident with and radically dependent upon divine

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<sup>65</sup> Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Salvation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 210.

<sup>66</sup> This concern is even raised within some corners of Roman Catholic theology. See, for example, Ignacio Ellacuría, "The Historicity of Christian Salvation," trans. Margaret D. Wilde, in *Ignacio Ellacuría: Essays on History, Liberation, and Salvation*, ed. Michael E. Lee (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2013), 149-50. Ellacuría notes that both nature and the supernatural will be taken up into participation in the life of God. Both are part of the same history. A sin/grace distinction allows more attention to be paid to differences between historical acts that allow for such participation in the life of God, and those that oppose them.

<sup>67</sup> So Van Til writes, "The common grace problem may quite properly be considered as being a part or aspect of the problem of the philosophy of history." Cornelius Van Til, "Common Grace 1," *Westminster Theological Journal* 8.1 (November 1945), 39.

acts, the doctrine of common grace compels a variegated view of the divine acts upon which all human acts are founded. In other words, if divine action supervenes upon created causal chains and created human decisions, the manner in which this supervenience occurs can vary. When God's act is the ground of human regeneration, we speak of special grace and acknowledge a form of concurrence that most perfectly draws the created order toward the new creation that will exist in communion with God. This regeneration and the subsequent sanctification and (eventually) glorification that follow upon it allow creatures to act in ways that are ever closer to the divine intentions for the world, in increasing consciousness of the way that their actions are concurrent with God's. Special grace is a means of speaking about God's direct action on the Church for the benefit of the Church in mission to the world.

While common grace contributes to the same ultimate redemptive end as special grace precisely because the divine acts of creation and redemption are inseparable (and consequently nature as sustained by common grace and special grace are inseparable),<sup>68</sup> common grace is distinguished from special grace in several regards. First, common grace does not necessarily lead to the regeneration of the particular human being who is the beneficiary of such grace. Common grace restrains sin in all individuals, but it also contributes to cultural and historical developments that may be external conditions or

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<sup>68</sup> This is an important claim that overcomes a possible dualism within the common grace and special grace distinction that makes it objectionable to certain theologians. Hans Boersma, for example, in an insightful but unfortunately all too brief review notes that the Kuyperian version of common grace frequently reduces the *telos* of common grace to mere created ends completely separate from the *telos* of special grace. On the one hand, this can seem to put certain areas of human life outside of the reach of redemption, while, on the other hand, this seems to reintroduce something akin to pure nature through the back door by suggesting nature can have a purpose completely separate from special grace. If we properly link God's act of creation and redemption and thereby make common grace ordered toward special grace, we can overcome Boersma's concerns. Hans Boersma, "The Spirit in Theology: Appropriating the Legacy of Abraham Kuyper (Review)," *Calvin Theological Journal* 40.2 (November 2005): 431-434.

means for the application of special grace toward regeneration or toward the sanctification of believers.<sup>69</sup> This latter aspect of common grace justifies its designation as “grace” against a number of objections.<sup>70</sup> If grace is that which restores human communion with God,<sup>71</sup> common grace is properly called grace not because communion is restored between God and those human beings who are the object of common grace, but because such people are the conduit of grace toward the Church. This is the case

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<sup>69</sup> “This common grace may be brought into relation with the grace of Christ in this sense, that this protection of man’s humanness provides *opportunity* for man to have salvation through Christ; but it is as such nevertheless not Christologically defined or limited.” G. C. Berkouwer, *Image*, 155. I would clarify Berkouwer’s claims here by insisting that, while common grace is not defined by the *mission* of Christ, it must nevertheless be understood to arise from the joint work of the Father, Son, and Spirit.

<sup>70</sup> Berkouwer refutes Herman Hoeksema, the most significant historical opponent to common grace, by noting that insofar as he grants the legitimacy of an organic development of society that may not manifest every sin committed by every man, Hoeksema’s objections raised against common grace neglect concurrence, instead adopting a “deistic” notion of human capabilities where God initially created human beings and permitted the fall, but where current human progress through civilization is explained with recourse to human nature apart from divine action. G. C. Berkouwer, *Image*, 159. Such arguments would not work against David Engelsma, the strongest opponent of common grace among recent Reformed theologians. Engelsma suggests that the notion of common grace confuses grace with providence. Providence, claims Engelsma, “works for the blessedness of the children of God... Providence *serves* grace, but providence *is not* grace” (59). However, Engelsma draws too sharp of a distinction between providence and grace such that the world preserved by providence, which Engelsma grants is a “continuation” of the work of creation (61), is cut off from the church as redeemed by grace. This is why Engelsma mistakenly believes common grace creates a purpose for creation apart from redemption: “the development of culture” (80). However, common grace allows us to understand such cultural developments as ordered toward the salvation of the elect, and thus gracious, and yet distinct from the special grace present within the Church. Engelsma’s mistake arises from the fact that he writes against a conception of common grace as the mere provision for the continuing existence of the world, the development of natural abilities, and Christian enjoyment of secular culture. Common grace is instead the proper means of connecting the divine work of creation with the divine work of redemption while preserving a distinction between the Church and the world and, further, between God’s providential work on behalf of the elect through common grace and God’s providential acts that may not directly contribute toward the sanctification of the Church but which rather allow for a temporary hindrance of such progress in holiness according to the permissive will of God. Without common grace, we are left with the inadequate binary of providence and grace. David J. Engelsma, *Common Grace Revisited: A Response to Richard J. Mouw’s He Shines in All That’s Fair*, (Grandville, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2003).

<sup>71</sup> John Owen, the Reformed theologian dealing most extensively with communion, calls grace “the door of entrance” to communion. John Owen, *Communion with the Triune God*, eds. Kelly M. Kapic and Justin Taylor (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 90.

precisely because the Church cannot fully be extricated from the world any more than grace can be severed from nature, salvation from history, or theology from cultural influences.<sup>72</sup> This is evident throughout the history of Christianity, as demonstrated by the transformation of ancient near east creation myths by the author of Genesis, by the adoption and reinterpretation of Hellenistic philosophical terms in patristic theology, or, significant for present purposes, by the way that the economy can provide an opportunity for the development of certain Christian virtues.

Another way of speaking about common grace as a divine action is to return to the terminology used in chapter 1, where I sought to identify aspects of the economy that various approaches to theology and economics considered redemptively significant. One of the goals of a non-contrastive view of transcendence was to preserve both the gratuity of salvation and human responsibility. If human and divine agency operate in the same domain in the same way (as is the case in a contrastive view of transcendence), then the more immanently within human faith God operates, the less God transcends that faith and the less it can therefore be properly called human. Non-contrastive views of transcendence attempt to affirm human responsibility while ensuring that regeneration is entirely a work of grace. With that aim in mind, if we can identify aspects of the economy that play some role in allowing for the sanctification of a believer, that is for something redemptively significant, then we must be able to speak of this redemptively

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<sup>72</sup> This need not imply affirmation of a natural theology or of common knowledge of God shared between secular and Christian perspectives, a concern central to Cornelius Van Til's reservations concerning standard presentations of common grace. Culture and history contribute a wide range of individual ideas, institutions, symbols, and images that on their own contribute nothing to society's general awareness of God. However, when these individual elements are properly arranged within a suitable theological framework, they can and do contribute to proper Christian understanding of and communion with God. For Van Til's concerns, see especially Cornelius Van Til, "Common Grace 2," *Westminster Theological Journal* 8.2 (May 1946), 166-200.



significant contribution as arising from divine action that is coincident with the human actions contributing to the development of sanctification. Common grace allows for such a claim without dissolving the divine actions associated with special grace into other divine actions in the world, which is to say without dissolving the Church into the world.

The second way that common grace is distinguished from special grace is in terms of human awareness of God. Whereas special grace brings one into personal awareness of God as Father, Son, and Spirit, common grace, though it often precedes such awareness, need not always result in it. Here we do well to speak in terms of communion with God, a common theological notion most clearly defined for Reformed theology by John Owen:

Our communion, then, with God consists in his communication of himself unto us, with our return unto him of that which he requires and accepts, flowing from that union which in Jesus Christ we have with him.<sup>73</sup>

Owen teaches that communion is voluntary and in actions,<sup>74</sup> and he always speaks of communion as a peculiar relationship with the three divine Persons. Communion is a distinctive result of special grace and is not guaranteed to arise from common grace.

In order to understand communion, we must distinguish between a relationship to a person and a personal relationship. All human actions bear some relationship to the divine persons insofar as all aspects of created existence are radically dependent upon God for their continued existence, but these actions are not related to God in a personal way. A personal relationship requires, in the words of Petro Chirico, “a mutual exchange

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<sup>73</sup> Owen, *Communion*, 94.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 92. Owen’s understanding is theologically defensible in the context of 2 Cor. 13:14, Eph. 2:8, and John 14:23, each of which seem to emphasize a connection between distinct aspects of grace and distinct devotional responses. Brian K. Kay, *Trinitarian Spirituality: John Owen and the Doctrine of God in Western Devotion* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 120-123.

in the area of intellect and will.”<sup>75</sup> Through communion we have a personal relationship with Father, Son, and Spirit, knowing each distinctively and willingly responding to each. We must also distinguish between possession and communion, drawing on Leonard Hodgson. Possession allows God to act through an individual to perform a particular work in a more elevated manner than otherwise possible, while in communion one has awareness of speaking to another.<sup>76</sup> As was stated at the beginning of the chapter, the primary Biblical category for divine action is that of speaking, or, in other words, that of revelation. However, God’s activity is not limited to such revelation. Through special grace, God brings the Church into communion with himself, resulting in a threefold set of personal relationships with distinctive awareness of Father, Son, and Spirit. This is made possible jointly through the self-communication of God and through our union with Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Through common grace, God possesses human beings, elevating them to act in a manner above their natural ability thereby contributing to a historical process wherein creation as a whole contributes to the preconditions for the communion made possible through special grace. Common grace thus describes God’s work through creation and history for the benefit of the Church, while special grace makes possible a communion with God that then inspires mission from the Church back into the world.

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<sup>75</sup> Petro F. Chirico, *The Divine Indwelling and Distinct Relations to the Indwelling Persons in Modern Theological Discussion* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1960), 28.

<sup>76</sup> Leonard Hodgson, *The Doctrine of the Trinity: Croall Lectures, 1942-1943* (London: Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 1946), 39-40. Of course such awareness can ebb and flow. If a Christian falls asleep, they do not lose communion with God. However, if there is never awareness of God as Father, Son, and Spirit, there is reason to believe that communion does not exist for the person in question.

Reformed theology has traditionally taught that grace is irresistible, but this claim should be interpreted only in regards to special grace.<sup>77</sup> The common grace by which human culture and history as a whole contribute toward the redemption of the Church can be resisted in two ways. First, while common grace is intended to contribute to communion with God, it is also quite possible that human culture and society may render the experience of communion with God more difficult to obtain. Western secularization is one example of culture rendering God more hidden in a variety of ways, among the body of believers and particularly for those outside the Church. Second, common grace can be resisted even more forcefully through sin, either in individual or social forms. Our rule about non-contrastive transcendence suggests that a sinning person cannot exist autonomously from God, and so it is possible to speak of God as allowing sin to be manifest in resistance to such common grace. Traditionally, Reformed theologians have distinguished between God's sovereign or effectual will and permissive will to make the point, where God merely permits sin by not giving the efficacious grace that would prevent it.<sup>78</sup> More commonly, however, the Reformed tradition has exercised caution and

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<sup>77</sup> Helpful here is Francis Turretin's distinction between decretive and executive grace. Decretive grace refers to the "eternal purpose of God concerning the electing of us before the foundations of the world were laid." Executive grace, on the other hand, refers to "the universal dispensation of that wonderful mystery (according to the variety of degrees and times)." Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Volume 1*, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1992), 3.20.9. In his discussion of irresistible grace, Turretin is clear: we cannot resist the hidden will of God that decrees events, and here we must include decretive grace. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Volume 2*, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1994), 15.6.24. However, we can resist "external means employed by the Spirit." Ibid., 15.6.5, 26. Turretin explicitly has in mind the preaching of the word and the call of the gospel, but the logic would apply no less to the influence of common grace operative externally on a believer toward sanctification. This external grace may be resisted, such that executive grace may take a different form. But the decretive grace brought to fulfillment according to the hidden will of God through effectual calling resulting in justification cannot be resisted.

<sup>78</sup> See for example Francis Turretin, *Institutes, Vol. 1*, 9.7.

attributed full causal responsibility for sin to man to safeguard the goodness of God.<sup>79</sup> In both theological strategies, common grace is not eliminated insofar as the creature does not sin to the point of reducing itself to oblivion. The permissive will of God merely facilitates a change in the ratio of grace operative on the Church indirectly as common grace relative to the direct operation of special grace. Common grace is merely diminished through the permissive will of God, or else sin is diminished through the increased activity of God through common grace. When sin increases in this manner, it not only renders communion with God more difficult, but it can impede the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit operating through special grace within the Church to the extent that Christians who are the object of such special grace may also be contaminated by and participants in the sin occurring in the wider culture. Therefore, society and culture cannot be seen as a monolithic conduit for God's common grace for the benefit of the Church but must be seen as a variable and historical reality that can either more or less fully contribute toward communion with God and the sanctifying application of special grace. The perfect harmony of the created order and the redeemed Church, of common grace and special grace, and of nature with all forms of grace will not be complete until the last day when God will be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

I can now speak more precisely about divine action in the economy than was possible merely on the grounds of the doctrine of concurrence coupled with a non-contrastive view of transcendence. All human economic activity must be seen as in some

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<sup>79</sup> Particularly significant are: *The Canons of Dort*, in *The Creeds of Christendom Vol. 3 – The Evangelical Protestant Creeds*, sixth edition, ed. Philip Schaff, rev. David S. Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), I.5; *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, in *The Creeds of Christendom Vol. 3 – The Evangelical Protestant Creeds*, sixth edition, ed. Philip Schaff, rev. David S. Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), III.1. Turretin's argument from the permissive will in the note above also insists that only Adam is responsible for sin.

sense radically dependent upon the action of God and coincident with God's own providential care for the world as a result of this understanding of the God/world relationship. However, while God may operate upon a believer through special grace within the economy, such grace is primarily operative through the Lord's Supper, baptism, liturgy and preaching within the Church. This is not to deny that special grace may contribute to the sanctification of believers through certain extra-ecclesial actions, including acts of mercy and charity just as much as acts of personal prayer, the reading of the scriptures, or exercise of the various spiritual disciplines. However, when I speak of God's work in the economy in this study, I will primarily be speaking about how the divine work of common grace that is concurrent with human activity in the market can contribute in redemptively significant ways to the overarching redemptive plan of God. This plan is being brought to fullness through the special grace that is primarily operative within the Church, but also importantly in a secondary sense through common grace operative within a certain subset of actions within the market, the focus of this study. When I speak of human resistance to such divine actions in the market, I have in mind either the manner in which the market is constructed such that it undermines common grace's contribution toward communion with God, or else the direct actions made possible through the permissive will of God whereby sanctification can be directly impeded as a result of individual or corporate sins in the marketplace. In discussing God's action in the economy and human failure to participate in this action, I am discussing the diminishment or increase of common grace's presence in the market, and thus of the increase or decrease of the creation's yielding to the redemptive historical activity of the Triune God.

### **The Triune God Who Acts**

So far our analysis of concurrent divine action has been explored from below, beginning with the two forms of grace made manifest by God's activity in creation and moving from these forms to explore how communion with God may be facilitated by these two forms of grace. The same notion of communion can be explored from above, beginning instead with Trinitarian theology as the basis for elucidating the personality of the God who acts in the world through common and special grace. It would be inappropriate to discuss divine action so extensively without pausing to reflect on God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit acting within creation, and specifically within the market. Theologians have already considered how the Trinity relates to the market, so before I turn to my proposal for how to deploy Trinitarian theology, I should first explain the shortcomings of the two predominant existing means to deploying trinitarian theology in theological analysis of economics: the exemplary method and the genealogical method. Once it is evident that these approaches are inadequate, it will be more clear that a proper Trinitarian approach must attend to divine action.

The term "exemplary method" refers to a broad range of theologians who see the Trinity as an exemplar of ideal society or economy. While one occasionally finds an ideal human society as the means of understanding the unity and diversity present in the Godhead, as for example in the writing of Taymans d'Eypernon, it is much more common to see a move from the ideal relations of the Godhead toward a theology of economy or society.<sup>80</sup> Quite often the theologians using this method are critical of

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<sup>80</sup> D'Eypernon describes the ideal human society as grounded in the unity of person and society by coupling an interpersonal/social basis of personhood established through love with a theory of society as the mutual affirmation of persons for one another in love. He then uses this to

capitalism, as for example when Jürgen Moltmann suggests that Trinitarian monotheism that views God as a single subject leads to political absolutism, but a proper view of the social Trinity of three Persons existing in relation to one another through *perichoresis* compels us to affirm the category of community against that of individuality, and to defend “personal socialism” against both “possessive individualism” and more pantheistic varieties of socialist thought.<sup>81</sup> Moltmann’s exemplary method is therefore an example of what I called the legitimizing approach in chapter 1. Similarly, Leonardo Boff advocates a “perichoretic-communion” model that he claims points us to correct political, economic, and ecclesial organization.<sup>82</sup> He, too, believes that strict monotheism leads to totalitarianism, and adds that exclusive emphasis on the Father alone leads to oppression by normativity, exclusive emphasis on the Son leads to oppression by leaders, and exclusive emphasis on the Spirit leads to anarchy.<sup>83</sup> Boff teaches that socialist societies are on the right track in emphasizing communal ownership of means of production, though they have often not gone far enough in allowing expressions of difference. The fact that the persons of the Trinity are different despite perfect harmony speaks against homogenizing tendencies in both capitalism and socialism.<sup>84</sup> “Everything in God is triadic, everything is *Patreque, Filioque* and *Spirituque*,” with the Son proceeding from the Father and the Spirit (*Spirituque*) and the Spirit proceeding from the Father and the

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explain how the unity of God is not a constraint upon the plurality. Taymans D’Eypernon, *Le Mystère Primordial: La Trinité dans sa Vivante Image* (Brussels: L’Édition Universelle, 1946), 83-91.

<sup>81</sup> Moltmann, *Trinity and the Kingdom*, 192-200.

<sup>82</sup> Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society*, trans. by Paul Burns (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), 150.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

Son (*Filioque*),<sup>85</sup> a fact which challenges capitalism's exclusion of the poor from real participation in the economy and its individualist nature. Both Boff and Moltmann treat the Trinity as an example of ideal human relationships and thus as a ground for criticizing economic structures.

M. Douglas Meeks treats the Trinity as exemplary in the same manner, but he also makes a genealogical account of how theological and economic concepts are historically interconnected much more central to his theology than do the previously considered authors.<sup>86</sup> Paying attention to the Trinity provides a basis for critique of the economy, while exploring the loss of Trinitarian thought in previous generations explains in part how our current malformed economy was able to emerge.<sup>87</sup> The Trinity thus “demythologizes” the god concepts undergirding capitalism by showing how the concept of God as a perfect monad, sovereign, free, and transcendent was eliminated with the decline of religion around the time of the rise of capitalism. These traditional divine attributes, “stripped from their metaphysical moorings in the divine *ousia* are now lodged in the market definitions of the human being.”<sup>88</sup> Against the early capitalist notion of God as monad whose residue contaminates economic theory, Meeks points to social trinitarianism's communal view of God as constituted by reciprocal relationships, a lack

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>86</sup> Moltmann does include a genealogical account of modern dictatorial political institutions, but pays little attention to the genealogical origins of our modern economy.

<sup>87</sup> Meeks develops three types of correlation between God and the economy: (a) disclosive correlation asks how ‘god concepts’ influence the economy, (b) critical correlation asks how the economy has influenced ‘god concepts,’ and (c) transformative correlation asks how our God concepts compel us to a change in praxis in the economy. M. Douglas Meeks, *God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1989), 41-2. For simplifying purposes, I include both disclosive and critical correlation under what I term the “genealogical method” insofar as both treat the historical relationship between economic and theological ideas, and I equate transformative correlation with what I term the “exemplary method.”

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 78.



of domination and hierarchy, and distinctive identity and work for each of the Persons who possess all things in common.<sup>89</sup> Such a view of God challenges the individualistic view of property ownership<sup>90</sup> derived from a theology of God as monadic self-possessor as well as collectivist visions of property, instead advocating a view where property and capital is “a means to nurture koinonia.”<sup>91</sup> For Meeks, the Trinity serves as an exemplar to critique exclusionary and individualistic views of property while a theology of God as monad instead of as triad lies behind our current problematic conceptions of property.

Theologians like Giorgio Agamben and John Milbank focus on the genealogical method while largely avoiding the exemplary method found in Moltmann, Boff, d’Eypernon, and Meeks. Their intention is to show how historical changes in trinitarian theology lie in the background of modern developments of political and economic thought. As discussed in chapter 1, John Milbank considers the medieval nominalist emphasis on a strongly simple will of God a replacement for an earlier trinitarian metaphysic. This replacement resulted in an individualistic view of economic and political agents agonistically competing in economic and political spaces in a way that was inconceivable in an earlier trinitarian ontology of participation such as that found in Thomas Aquinas.<sup>92</sup> A similar argument is deployed by many theologians that form the Radical Orthodoxy approach. For Giorgio Agamben it is not a loss of trinitarian theology that explains the modern economic and political situation, but the development of trinitarian thought itself. Agamben traces the development of early Christian notions of

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>90</sup> “The kind of property necessary to the logic of the market is the right of an individual or corporation (natural or artificial individual) to exclude others from some use or enjoyment of something.” M. Douglas Meeks, “The Social Trinity and Property,” in *God’s Life in Trinity*, eds. Miroslav Volf and Michael Welker (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 16

<sup>91</sup> M. Douglas Meeks, *God the Economist*, 113.

<sup>92</sup> Milbank, *Social Theory*.

the divine *oikonomía*, the work of God in the world as distinguished from God as Trinity *in se*, through the medieval period and into modern political philosophy. He claims the early theological notion of *oikonomía* allowed for a division of divine action without a fracture of divine ontology,<sup>93</sup> but what was initially a pragmatics of divine activity ultimately became a philosophical division between ontology and praxis.<sup>94</sup> This resulted in a division between Kingdom (ontology/sovereignty) and Government (praxis/ordering),<sup>95</sup> leaving us with the modern condition of an impotent sovereign (typically the people) upheld by spectacle and glory coupled with a powerful bureaucratic government.<sup>96</sup> This spectacle of glory is also the basis of capitalist economics insofar as it distracts us from the bureaucratic and corporate management of daily economic affairs.<sup>97</sup> Both Agamben and Milbank share the same basic genealogical method, where the history of the rise or decline of theological thought on the Trinity lies behind modern economic thought.

Despite certain benefits offered by each perspective,<sup>98</sup> ultimately I find both the exemplary method and the genealogical method deficient. The exemplary approach is too confident in our human ability to correlate the relationships between the members of the immanent Trinity with a particular version of human society. An analogical

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<sup>93</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, trans. Lorenzo Chiesa (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2011), 14.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 276.

<sup>98</sup> The exemplary approach, no doubt, will serve in pastoral contexts far more than the theology I will develop in this work. Preaching on the Trinity as manifesting a different form of community can be far more illuminating for laity than a protracted metaphysical analysis of divine action and the impact of models on the socially constructed market. Similarly, the genealogical approach's alternative narrative of history offers something of an aesthetic apologetic that will be (and has been!) beneficial in a number of academic circles where the current project would perhaps make little headway.

understanding of the relationship between God and creation (which is both assumed in the exemplary method's treatment of the Trinity as analogous to human society and demanded by a non-contrastive view of transcendence) admits a greater dissimilarity than similarity between Creator and creature.<sup>99</sup> Consequently, while Christ himself gives some validity to the Trinity being exemplary of human community when he prays that the Church may be one as the Father and Son are one (John 17:21), if theologians press the analogy too far it is quite easy to develop the argument in a surprisingly wide range of directions. Thus, one can also argue against Boff, Meeks, and Moltmann<sup>100</sup> that the distinctive and yet cooperative missions of the Son and Spirit affirm capitalism's emphasis on freely working together to meet one another's needs through markets,<sup>101</sup> or that distinctive work through specialization and trade mirrors the Trinity as differentiated yet one,<sup>102</sup> or that the eternal *taxis* between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the basis for a wide range of created hierarchies within society.<sup>103</sup> It is often quite difficult to adjudicate between these diverse positions precisely because they tend to be most innovative and thereby to deviate furthest from classical doctrine precisely at the points where the analogy is most sharply drawn. This is particularly the case with Boff's emphasis on how "everything in God is triadic, everything is *Patreque, Filioque* and *Spirituque*."<sup>104</sup> In

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<sup>99</sup> This notion arises from the fourth Lateran Council (1215), whose definition states, "between the Creator and the creature so great a likeness cannot be noted without the necessity of noting a greater dissimilarity between them." Henry Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (Fitzwilliam, NH: Loreto Publications, 2001), 171.

<sup>100</sup> There are, of course, others who adopt a similar approach and reach conclusions that are more closely aligned with Boff, Meeks, Moltmann. Perhaps most noteworthy is Enrique Cambón, *Trinità modello sociale* (Rome: Città Nuova, 1999). See also Gold, *Horizons*, 56-7.

<sup>101</sup> Victor Claar, "What I Wish Theologians Understood About Markets and the Economists Who Study Them," *Faith & Economics* 60 (Fall 2012), 36.

<sup>102</sup> Novak, *Spirit*, 337-40.

<sup>103</sup> Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son & Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, & Relevance* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005).

<sup>104</sup> Boff, *Trinity*, 146.

introducing the novel theological terms of “Patreque” and “Spirituque” such that divine procession is equally from all the Persons, Boff is shifting his theology in a clearly communitarian direction in such a way that it is unclear whether his theology drives his politics or whether his politics drives his theology. The case can equally be made in regard to numerous other theologians who use the exemplary method.<sup>105</sup> Those less common theologians like d’Eypernon who move from society to the Trinity are no better off precisely because such a move requires a prior vision of the ideal society which is the basis for understanding the Trinity. In either case, it is not clear that trinitarian theology itself contributes anything to our understanding of society and economy.

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<sup>105</sup> Thus Moltmann makes perichoresis the basis of his account of divine unity in a way unprecedented in the theological tradition. Traditionally, perichoresis required a prior ontological basis for unity such as the *homoousion*, rather than serving as the basis for such unity.

Perichoresis assures consubstantiality and inseparability while signifying the distinction of persons, but since first applied to the Trinity in John of Damascus, Christological use of the term follows immediately as a consequence of the hypostatic unity, not as a basis for it. When John used perichoresis with an apologetic function to logically show how unity and plurality could be possible in the hypostatic union just as it is in the Trinity, he was innovatively applying the Christological term *perichoresis* to the immanent Trinity in hopes of persuading miaphysites who affirmed the Trinity to accept Chalcedon. Damascene also uses the term as a means of testifying to the unity of the Godhead, but not as an ontological basis for this unity insofar as he cites and relies upon Gregory Nazianzus’s view of the simplicity of the divine nature as a basis for perichoresis. Emmanuel Durand, *La périchorèse des personnes divines: Immanence mutuelle, Réciprocité et communion* (Paris: Cerf, 2005), 26-35; cf. James D. Gifford, Jr., *Perichoretic Salvation* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 21. Meeks’s account of social trinitarianism is predicated on a distinction between Eastern and Western approaches to the Trinity that is ultimately historically untenable, and which drives us to a false choice between a monadic view of God as single individual or social Trinitarianism. Neither option adequately reflects the variability of the historical tradition East or West. M. Douglas Meeks, *God the Economist*, 110-112. Such East/West dichotomies are often (and perhaps somewhat inaccurately) seen as arising from: Theodore de Régnon, *Études de Théologie Positive sur la Sainte Trinité: Première Série – Exposé du Dogme* (Paris: Victor Retaux et Fils, 1892). For my fuller account of the problems with such dichotomies, see D. Glenn Butner, Jr., “For and Against de Régnon: Trinitarianism East and West,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 17.4 (Oct. 2015): 399-412. Likewise, Bruce Ware is innovative in his account of the eternal *taxis* within the Trinity as a distinction of roles grounded in the eternal submission of the Son to the Father, an innovation that seems to make will an essential property instead of a personal property as necessitated by dyothelite Christology. See my critique: D. Glenn Butner, Jr., “Eternal Functional Subordination and the Problem of the Divine Will,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 58.1 (March 2015), 131-149.

The genealogical method is at times problematic due to a lack of historical rigor. This is the case, for example, in the work of Agamben, who frequently misrepresents the historical development of trinitarian theology. For example, Agamben treats the Arian controversy as a debate about whether praxis is grounded in being and therefore whether it has an *arche*, or whether “the Son – that is, the one who has assumed the economy of salvation – is unfounded in the Father.”<sup>106</sup> The debate never concerned “chronological precedence,” or “a problem of rank,”<sup>107</sup> claims Agamben, citing Arius’ letter to Alexander of Alexandria. Against Agamben’s interpretation, it is clear in Arius’ letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia that the eternal existence of the Son is at issue, which Arius denies in teaching “before he was begotten or created or ordained or founded, he was not.”<sup>108</sup> Indeed, rank was equally contested, as Arius considered the Son only God by grace and not by nature.<sup>109</sup> These two issues were of grave concern to Alexander of Alexandria, the first to accuse Arius of heresy.<sup>110</sup> Strangely, Agamben also treats the creed emerging from the Western representatives at the council of Serdica (343 AD) as demonstrating that the main issue of the Arian debate was whether the Son was anarchic

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<sup>106</sup> Agamben, *Kingdom*, 57-59.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>108</sup> Arius of Alexandria, “The Letter of Arius to Eusebius of Nicomedia,” in *Christology of the Later Fathers*, ed. Edward R. Hardy (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1954), 330.

<sup>109</sup> This is particularly the case in a passage of the *Thalia* preserved in Athanasius of Alexandria, which, agreeing with Hanson, we have good reason to accept as authentic, even granting with Williams that Arius’s theological *priorities* may be misrepresented. Arius writes, “even if he is called God, but he is not true, but God by being sharer of grace.” R.P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy 318-381* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 10-14. Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*, revised edition (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 95, 98. For a helpful summary of Arius’s theology, see also J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, revised edition (New York: Harper Collins, 1960), 229.

<sup>110</sup> Alexander of Alexandria, “Epistle Catholic,” in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol. 6, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, trans. James B.H. Hawkins (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1885), 297. See also the summary in Hanson, *Search*, 16-18.

(without *arche*).<sup>111</sup> However, claiming that Serdica clearly reveals what was at stake in the Arian debates is methodologically dubious given that the council dissolved due to terminological misunderstandings between the Latin West and the Greek East.<sup>112</sup> Despite this methodological warning, it is still clear enough that Serdica was concerned both to refute Arius' claim that the Son had a beginning and Marcellus of Ancyra's (purportedly misinterpreted) claim that the Son would have an end.<sup>113</sup> The first lines of the Profession of Faith of the Western bishops clearly rejects those who deny true divinity to the Son or claim that being begotten means that he came into existence.<sup>114</sup> The rank and eternality of the Son remained central, and Agamben's claim that the entire debate puts praxis and ontology in conflict misreads the situation. Rather, the debate attempted to ontologically ground praxis (insofar as we can identify the Son with praxis) in the Father, not to divide the Son from the divine being. This misreading is only one of numerous examples that one could point to in Agamben that undermine the validity of his genealogical narrative. Even when theologians like Milbank and Meeks who have a far better grasp of theological history than Agamben attempt a genealogical account, the result remains either highly contentious or theologically underdeveloped.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Agamben, *Kingdom*, 58.

<sup>112</sup> R.P.C. Hanson is correct when he argues that we cannot speak of an Arian East and a Nicene West, a dichotomy that Agamben's treatment of the Western Creed seems to assume. Hanson, *Search*, 295-304. Serdica is perhaps best understood as an early (and bumbling) entrance of pro-Nicene Western theologians *en masse* into debates surrounding Arianism.

<sup>113</sup> Kelly, *Doctrines*, 242.

<sup>114</sup> Hanson, *Search*, 301.

<sup>115</sup> Meeks's account remains underdeveloped. His work spends so much time on an exemplary account and on solid, practical analysis of economic thought that he does not have enough space remaining to demonstrate his genealogical claims with adequate historical rigor. Milbank has written far more lengthy treatments of theological history that particularly emphasize the impact of nominalism, but even his reading of Duns Scotus, for example, remains highly contested to the point where his narrative will likely need to be softened or qualified in certain respects. Adjudicating particular debates need not concern us now given the final problem with both approaches, raised below. For objections to Milbank, see particularly the work of Richard

One final problem with both the genealogical method and the exemplary method lies much closer to the heart of this project and brings the focus of discussion back in line with earlier portions of this chapter: Neither means of using the Trinity in a theology of economics treats the Persons of the Father, Son, and Spirit as active within the economic sphere. Instead, both the exemplary and genealogical method emphasize the impact of the *idea* of the Trinity on the economy. For the genealogical strategy this is most clear. Whether the genealogical account emphasizes the historical development of Trinitarian thought or its decline in later history, the main concern is illustrating how the history of theological ideas resulted in certain political and economic ideas and practices grounded in and/or justified by an inaccurate notion of God. These historical questions are important, but do little to help us identify how God is working in the economy today or to help us discover how human beings might resist this action. The exemplary method also emphasizes theological thought about God by making correct understanding of the immanent Trinity a prerequisite of (or in d'Eypernon's case partly a result of) correct understanding of society. Yet society is not properly formed through careful reflection on the Trinitarian processions *ad intra*, but by yielding to the work of Father, Son, and Spirit *ad extra* through the society and economy.<sup>116</sup> The primary appeal of Trinitarian theology lies in its ability to uncover the work of Father, Son, and Spirit that is concurrent with human economic acts, and in its ability to clarify how such works result in communion

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Cross, "Duns Scotus and Suárez at the Origins of Modernity," in *Deconstructing Radical Orthodoxy: Postmodern Theology, Rhetoric and Truth*, eds. Wayne J. Hankey and Douglas Hedly (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 65-80; Richard Cross, "Where Angels Fear to Tread: Duns Scotus and Radical Orthodoxy," *Antonianum* 76 (2001): 1-36.

<sup>116</sup> This is the case even if part of that divine work is making us aware of how our society falls short of the ideal manifest within the Trinity, assuming we could find a way to articulate this ideal without overestimating our human abilities. Such understanding would still remain a work of divine illumination.

with God as Trinity. Our task is not primarily to return to our roots and an earlier articulation of trinitarian theology, but to return to the God who is acting toward redemption today as Father, Son, and Spirit.

God's work *ad extra* in creation as Father, Son, and Spirit is traditionally referred to as the *oikonomia*, or the economic Trinity. I can now re-state the task of this project as follows: our task is to correlate the *oikonomia* or economic Trinity with the human economy, exploring how concurrent human and divine actions unite human aspirations in the market with God's redemptive work in the *oikonomia* as Father, Son, and Spirit through common grace or, conversely, how human economic interactions may undermine such common grace by the permissive will of God.

Most classical thought on the Trinity has affirmed the claim that the *opera dei ad extra indivisa sunt*. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit do not work independently of one another in redemption history, but cooperate in all divine action. Such principles derive in part from metaphysical concerns (which will be addressed shortly) and in part from Scriptural patterns, as seen in particular instances like the simultaneous presence and cooperative work of Father, Son, and Spirit at the baptism of Jesus (Matt. 3:13-17 and pars.), or more significantly through the Biblical accounts of the works of creation and redemption. At creation, the Father speaks and creation begins to exist in the manner spoken (i.e. "God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." Gen. 1:3). The New Testament depicts the Son as the very Word of God (John 1:1), the one who proceeds from the Father and in whom "all things were created, in heaven and on earth... all things were created through him and for him" (Col. 1:15-16). This work of creation does not exclude the Spirit, who "was hovering over the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2). Psalm 33:6



summarizes well: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.” The Hebrew word for “breath” here, *ruach*, is the same word found in Genesis 1:2 typically translated as Spirit; in the Septuagint, the word used is *pneuma*, also meaning Spirit/breath. The three divine Persons worked in harmony in creating the world, and continue in harmony in sustaining that world. Even in the act of the incarnation of Christ, while it is accurate to say that only the hypostasis Son is incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, it is still necessary to affirm that there is a work of the Father and of the Spirit that is in cooperation with the Son at all times, insofar as the Son who is the Image of the Father does only what he sees his Father doing (John 5:19), and these acts are always in the Holy Spirit’s power (Matt. 12:17,28, Heb. 9:14, Luke 4:1, etc.).<sup>117</sup> Such patterns illustrate the indivisibility of the work of Father, Son, and Spirit.

Affirming the indivisibility of the divine works *ad extra* was central to the development of trinitarian theology. The unity of the divine work affirmed the consubstantiality of the three Persons in a manner that retained monotheism. To this end Gregory of Nyssa explains that the divine nature itself is ineffable in such a fashion that when we speak of God we primarily speak of the divine works God brings about on our behalf in creation. In fact, the very word “Godhead” (*theotēs*) is derived from “beholding” (*thea*). God is the one who beholds all. The Scriptures not only petition the Father to see all through prayer (as in Ps. 84:8), but also teach that Jesus knows the thoughts of those who condemn him (Matt. 9:4), and indicate that the Spirit sees even the lies within one’s heart (Acts 5:3). Because our language about God relates foremost to

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<sup>117</sup> Thus the creed of the eleventh council of Toledo affirms, “We must believe that the entire Trinity accomplished the Incarnation of the Son of God, because the works of the Trinity are inseparable. However, only the Son took the form of a servant [cf. Phil. 2:7] in the singleness of His person, not in the unity of His divine nature.” Denzinger, *Sources*, 110.

God's acts and secondarily to the nature, Nyssa argues, we can reasonably infer the unity of Father, Son, and Spirit from the unified acts of the three because the Father does not work without the Spirit or Son, nor the Spirit without Father and Son, nor even the Son without Father and Spirit. We can properly speak of one Godhead and one act of beholding, shared indivisibly by Father, Son, and Spirit, three persons who are one God. "The action of each in any matter is not separate and individualized."<sup>118</sup> (Here we might benefit from recalling Irenaeus of Lyons' metaphor treating the Son and Spirit as the "hands of the Father.")<sup>119</sup> Yet such indivisible unity of action does not entail that the contributions of the Father, Son, and Spirit are indistinguishable. Though the three divine Persons do not blend three distinct works into a composite single work, Nyssa suggests that the same single work can be said to issue from the Father, be actualized through the Son, and be completed by the Spirit.<sup>120</sup> In fact, uniformly among the Cappadocians, the

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<sup>118</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, "An Answer to Ablabius: That We Should Not Think of Saying There Are Three Gods," in *Christology of the Later Fathers*, ed. Edward R. Hardy (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1954), 256-267. The point made here by Gregory was widely adopted in the theology of the time, as well as in subsequent ages. On patristic support, see Kelly, *Doctrines*, 266-268, 273. We see a similar claim in the aforementioned creed of the eleventh council of Toledo (675), which affirms "We must not consider these three persons separable, since we believe that no one before the other, no one after the other, no one without the other ever existed or did anything." Denzinger, *Sources*, 109. In the East this indivisibility of the divine actions resulted in the Palamite theology of the undivided *energeia* of God. These energies circulated through the persons according to Gregory of Nyssa's pattern to be discussed below with the Father as source, the Son as instantiation, and the Spirit as the perfection of each energy, a point missed by many commentators. See Jacques Lison, "L'Énergie des Trois Hypostases Divines Selon Grégoire Palamas," *Science et Esprit*, 45.1 (1992), 67-77. Reformed scholasticism maintained the same basic stance with little revision. See Richard A. Muller, *Post Reformation Reformed Dogmatics. Volume Four: The Triunity of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 257-260.

<sup>119</sup> As, for example, in the statement "For by the hands of the Father, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit, man... was made in the likeness of God." Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. I, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1967), 5.6.1.

<sup>120</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, "Ablabius," 262. As Khaled Anatolios summarizes, "The notion of separate agencies resulting in distinct actions, however intimately co-operative (as in a symphony, for example, where each player creates a distinct sound that is joined with the others in a unified sound), is ruled out (the violinist does not participate in the particular sound that the

indivisibility of the divine work was meant to preserve the monarchy of the Father, but not at the expense of discernible experience of the Father, Son and the Spirit in the work of redemption.<sup>121</sup> Such an emphasis persisted through successive generations, where Nyssa's formula was often reproduced. Perhaps the most interesting reformulation of his pattern is offered by Bonaventure, who appropriates efficient causation to the Father, formal causation to the Son, and final causation to the Holy Spirit.<sup>122</sup>

The notion of the indivisibility of the work *ad extra* was also important as a means of ensuring that the divine Persons were distinguished by their processions alone, again to ensure the unity of the Trinity. This function of the indivisibility of the Triune works *ad extra* was particularly central to a number of early medieval debates. When Roscelin of Campiégne argued that the Father, Son, and Spirit must be three discrete things (*res*) in order for it to be possible to speak of the Son being incarnate but not the Father, he was probably using a theory of language where words pick out individual things, so if we are to say that the Son alone was incarnate, the word "Son" must point to a thing (*res*) distinct from the Father and Spirit. In the end, he sought to preserve the distinction between acts of the Father, Son, and Spirit, specifically of the incarnation, at

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cellist makes). But the notion of an altogether undifferentiated agency in which each of the persons partakes in exactly the same manner is also implicitly but very clearly ruled out by Gregory's consistent strategy of using three different verbs to distribute the common action distinctly to the three persons... The typical pattern for that distribution is that every action issues from the father, is actualized through the Son, and is completed by the Spirit." Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), 231.

<sup>121</sup> Gregory Nazianzus teaches that an "identity of motion" protects us from *anarchia* and *polyarchia*. Gregory of Nazianzus, "The Theological Orations," trans. Charles Gordon Browne and James Edward Swallow, in *Christology of the Later Fathers*, ed. R. Hardy (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Know, 1954), III.2. Similarly Basil of Caesarea assures the reader that the Father, Son, and Spirit do not work together out of a lack of power inherent in any person that necessitates composite work, but rather as a metaphysical necessity of the shared divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Anderson (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980), §38.

<sup>122</sup> Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions*, IV.2.

the cost of divine simplicity, even jeopardizing the *homoousion*.<sup>123</sup> Anselm of Canterbury offered an initial response to Roscelin, arguing that we have no means of discerning three separate things within the Godhead on the basis of distinct action because Father, Son, and Spirit share a common will and activity in their consubstantial nature. If the one will and action of God do not ensure this unity but rather arise from a unity between three things that is otherwise established, we must not only conclude that God is composite, but that God's perfection is derivative of some force outside of the will, power, and nature of God.<sup>124</sup> Anselm rightly recognizes that he must articulate a metaphysical basis for the distinction of the persons grounded in a different theory of theological language to properly respond to Roscelin, which prompts his earliest discussion of relational opposition, a doctrine claiming the persons are distinguished through personal predicates that cannot logically be stated of the same person such as "Father" and "Son."<sup>125</sup> The positive outcome of the doctrine of relational opposition was the resulting guarantee that the persons were only distinguished by their processions and not by discrete external works. This guarantee ensured aseity because distinguishing the processions was adequate for the Son to eternally be the Son and not the Father; particular relations to creation such as the incarnation were not necessary to distinguish the persons from one another. Were such relations to creation necessary, then the Triune God would require

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<sup>123</sup> If Father, Son, and Spirit have different essential properties, they cannot possess the same essence. For a brief summary of Roscelin's theology in historical context, see Lauge O. Nielson, "Trinitarian Theology from Alcuin to Anselm," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 162-167; Peter Gemeinhardt, "Logic, Tradition and Ecumenics: Latin Developments of Trinitarian Theology between c. 1075 and c. 1160," in *Trinitarian Theology in the Medieval West*, ed. Pekka Kärkkäinen (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Society, 2007), 15-16.

<sup>124</sup> Anselm of Canterbury, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, eds. Brian Davies and G.R. Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), §5.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, §12.

creation to exist in order to be Father, Son, and Spirit. However, it should be noted that, as articulated by Anselm, relational opposition alone risks reducing the persons to a formal distinction based on a logical contradiction between the personal properties,<sup>126</sup> while failing to account both for Scriptural patterns of language about Father, Son, and Spirit that do not depend upon opposition and for specific reasons why the Son was incarnate and not the Father or Spirit. More work had to be done.

Theological discussion of how the Son can be called the “wisdom of God” in 1 Corinthians 1:24 dates at least to the time of Augustine of Hippo.<sup>127</sup> However, what had been a peripheral matter in Augustine became of central concern in one of Roscelin’s students, Peter Abelard, who sought to address the metaphysical question raised by his teacher in a more vigorously philosophical manner than had Anselm.<sup>128</sup> Here again theological language and the distinction of the persons are of central importance. Abelard argued that the single simple being of God was at once powerful, wise, and good such

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<sup>126</sup> This is particularly the case when Anselm later deployed the doctrine much more clearly in debates surrounding the *filioque*. Anselm of Canterbury, *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit*, in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, eds. Brian Davies and G.R. Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), §1. Later theologians deploying an Anselmian logic grounded in the relations of opposition avoided these risks. For example, Bernard Lonergan suggests that the works *ad extra* are united because only the processions and the missions that are grounded in these possessions have the necessary oppositional relationship to distinguish acts such that the Father sends the Son, or the Spirit being given by the Father and the Son. There is no such opposition in creation, and so it must be a combined work. Bernard Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Volume 12: The Triune God: Systematics*, eds. and trans. Michael G. Shields and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 477.

<sup>127</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *On the Trinity*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* Vol. III, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Aurther West Haddan (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998). Augustine’s main concern was to explain how the Son could be the wisdom of God without forcing the claim that the Father lacks his own wisdom. To overcome this possibility, Augustine develops an account of wisdom as an example of essential predication (VI.1-4, VII.1-2). Augustine only briefly treats the question of why the Son is called Wisdom. Unlike the medieval account rooted in the processions, Augustine’s account, while implicitly related to the processions, explicitly focuses on the Son’s mission as the one revealing the wisdom of the Father to explain the pattern of speech (VII.3).

<sup>128</sup> Constant J. Mews, *Abelard and Heloise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 101-102.

that the three properties of Power (*potentia*), Wisdom (*sapientia*), and Goodness (*benignitas*) that were three irreducible ways of defining the highest good served as the basis for the distinction between a powerful Father, wise Son, and good Spirit.<sup>129</sup> Abelard was condemned twice for his theology, first at the Council of Soissons (1121) and then at the Council of Sens (1141). Though his opponents appear to have had difficulty fully understanding his theology, the condemnation of Abelard was ultimately justified. His theology sought to ground the personal distinctions in three related but irreducible essential properties instead of in personal relations, an approach inevitably tending toward Sabellianism.

The indivisibility of the divine works *ad extra* means that we cannot ground the personal distinction between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit in divided acts of each of the persons. Trinitarianism chooses a different route than polytheism in this regard by grounding distinction in relations of origin, thereby affirming monarchy over polyarchy and refusing to posit a God of creation named the Father over and against a God of redemption named the Son and a God of sanctification named the Spirit. Father, Son, and Spirit all work in a unified manner in creation, redemption, and sanctification. Sound theology must also avoid reducing the persons to a pure formal or logical distinction of oppositional relations, as Anselm tends to do. The persons are the relations, but they cannot be seen as only relations.<sup>130</sup> Unlike created persons, the divine persons are

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<sup>129</sup> Mews, *Abelard*, 109; Dominique Poirel, “Scholastic Reasons, Monastic Meditations and Victorine Conciliations: The Question of the Unity and Plurality of God in the Twelfth Century,” trans. Craig Stephen Titus, in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 170-171.

<sup>130</sup> Some later medieval theology recognized this need. So Peter Lombard can write in the *Sentences* that if “Father” only signified “begot” it “would not be the name of a hypostasis, that is, of a person, but only the name of a property” (XXVII.2.1). The names do “not denote only a

*subsistent* relations,<sup>131</sup> we might say three distinct *tropos hyparxeōs*, which requires us to recognize that the relations between Father, Son, and Spirit are the basis for distinctive aspects of the undivided divine work *ad extra* through which the believer can have communion with God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each united work of God is manifest in three aspects corresponding to the three distinctive ways in which the persons eternally subsist in relation to one another, as ungenerated Father, generated Son, and as the Spirit breathed forth to complete the eternal triadic communion of love. To distinguish the persons as Abelard did on the basis of three dimensions of power undermines the interpersonal and relational basis of this eternal communion.

These considerations bring us to a final medieval development that cannot be ignored: the emergence of the doctrine of appropriations. Abelard's use of power, wisdom, and goodness was not novel. As noted above, since patristic times theologians would frequently practice appropriation, the act of making a common attribute proper to a person. In Abelard's time, the as of yet unnamed practice initially served an evasive purpose, allowing the author what Dominique Poirel has called a sort of "spiritual license, similar to that of a poet."<sup>132</sup> Indeed, Abelard's triad of goodness, wisdom, and power had a long historical pedigree among theologians utilizing such license,<sup>133</sup> but the novelty of twelfth century trinitarianism lay in turning what had been a poetic practice into a fixed logical relation. For Abelard, the fixity of the properties of goodness,

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relation, but also a hypostasis, that is, it signifies a subsistence" (XXVII.2.2). Peter Lombard, *The Sentences Book I: The Mystery of the Trinity*, trans. Giulio Silano (PIMS, 2007).

<sup>131</sup> Here is another reason to reject the exemplary method. Only the divine persons are subsistent relations, so human relations can never hope to take the form of divine relations.

<sup>132</sup> Dominique Poirel, *Livre de la Nature et Débat Trinitaire au XII<sup>e</sup> Siècle: Le De Tribus Diebus de Hugues de Saint-Victor* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2002), 281.

<sup>133</sup> This pedigree included including Basil of Caesarea, Ambrose of Milan, Augustine of Hippo, Paschasius Radbertus, and Anselm of Laon, among others. *Ibid.*, 348-368.

wisdom, and power allows Jesus Christ to speak of God as Father, Son and Spirit. To cite Poirel again, Abelard

Does not want to explain why some attributes, that the most rigorous theology considers to be substantial and ‘common’, are sometimes applied as ‘proper’ to a particular person, but why power, wisdom, and goodness, which he holds to be ‘proper’ attributes in themselves (*per se dicta*), can in certain contexts (*in contextu ... orationis*) become ‘common’ to the Three.<sup>134</sup>

Hugh of St. Victor, Abelard’s contemporary and a major theologian of the Victorene school of theology, took the opposite approach, arguing that the personal properties are the basis for appropriating essential attributes to a particular person. So Hugh argues that while Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all powerful, wise, and good, it is possible to appropriate one property to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit respectively based on a “likeness” between the relations of origin and a particular property. So the Father can be called Powerful because he is the origin of the Spirit and the Son, and psychologically Hugh is convinced that power is the source of wisdom and love in the soul.<sup>135</sup> What is important here is not the particular psychological analogy, but the fact that the divine persons, which Victorene theology ultimately described as “an incommunicable existence of the divine nature,”<sup>136</sup> can rightly be associated with a substantial property if this property is more clearly expressed in their personal mode of existence, which is to say in their personhood.

What in Hugh and Abelard was manifest as a concern about divine properties, with Hugh’s doctrine of appropriations clearly preferable, soon became a theology of divine action, where specific divine acts could be appropriated to the Father, Son, and

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<sup>134</sup> Poirel, “Scholastic Reasons,” 171.

<sup>135</sup> Hugh of St. Victor, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari. (Cambridge, MA: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1951), I.3.27.

<sup>136</sup> Richard of St. Victor, *Richard of St. Victor, On the Trinity: English Translation and Commentary*, trans. Ruben Angelici (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), 4.22.



Spirit based on their personal properties and mutual relations. Thus the Father is most fittingly seen as Creator because he is the source of the Son and Spirit, though the work of creation is united among the three. The Son is most fittingly seen as Redeemer because he is sent by the Father in the flesh in a way that corresponds to the eternal generation of the Son, though the Father and the Spirit both work toward redemption. And the Spirit is most fittingly known through the act of sanctification that brings redemption to completion, because the Spirit completes the Trinity as a communion of perfect love.<sup>137</sup> All the divine acts can be said to be the unified and undivided work of Father, Son, and Spirit, who are each manifest in the single acts as source, manifestation, and perfection of that act respectively, but in a manner that the particular act in question can still be understood as primarily the act of Father, Son, or Spirit depending on whether that act more closely conforms to and thus apparently terminates in the particular manner of subsistence proper to the Father, Son, or Spirit. If the divine work was divided, appropriations would be unnecessary, but since the works of God *ad extra* are undivided works of the *Triune* God, and since this Triune God is nothing that is not the relations between Father, Son, and Spirit, all the undivided acts *ad extra* must still reflect the relations between the persons in such a way that appropriations are possible.

Both the doctrine of appropriations and the claim that the *opera dei ad extra indivisa sunt* have come under significant criticism in modern theology. So Catherine Mowry LaCugna argues that the indivisibility of the divine works “tends to blur any real distinctions among the divine persons and thereby formalizes in Latin theology the

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<sup>137</sup> For a helpful summary of Reformed thought on this matter, see Muller, *Dogmatics*, 267-274.

breach between *oikonomia* and *theologia*.<sup>138</sup> She sees the doctrine of appropriations as a means of hiding the modalistic tendencies of Augustinian trinitarianism.<sup>139</sup> Colin Gunton worries that the claim *opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa* is often so overstated that it makes a distinction among the persons impossible.<sup>140</sup> Even T. F. Torrance, who tends to be less critical of the Western tradition than LaCugna and Gunton, considers the doctrine of appropriations “an idea that is both otiose and damaging.”<sup>141</sup> These modern objections are mistaken. Rejecting the indivisibility of the divine works toward creation undermines the monarchy of God, while making God’s eternal identity dependent upon unique hypostatic relations to creation risks divine aseity for no reason. Modern theologians seek to preserve the possibility of a distinctive relation between humans beings and Father, Son, and Spirit, but this was consonant with the intent of the doctrine of the indivisibility of the works *ad extra* as combined with the doctrine of appropriations. As Robert Jenson reminds us, the three persons do not work in an undivided way because they “are indistinguishable but because they are perfectly mutual.”<sup>142</sup> Torrance himself recognizes that the indivisibility of the work *ad extra* means that there is no hidden act of the Father “behind the back of Jesus Christ or apart from the mission of the Spirit.”<sup>143</sup> Yet we must simultaneously affirm that for particular divine acts we can speak of the Father standing further back while the Son is made more clearly manifest through an act that is properly appropriated to him. We can affirm with William Perkins that, “The works of God are...

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<sup>138</sup> Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 99.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>140</sup> Colin Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 4.

<sup>141</sup> Thomas F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God: One Being, Three Persons* (New York: T&T Clark, 1996), 200.

<sup>142</sup> Jenson, *Systematic* vol. 1, 113.

<sup>143</sup> T.F. Torrance, *Doctrine of God*, 108.

common to the trinity, the peculiar manner of working always reserved to every person. The end of all these is the manifestation of the glory of God.”<sup>144</sup> The goal of the undivided work of the Triune God is communion with God as Father, Son, and Spirit. As Owen reminds us, “when we have communion with one Person principally through one thing, we also have communion with the other two Persons in a secondary manner.”<sup>145</sup>

### **A Theological Starting Point**

The starting point for connecting the market economy with the triune God is not an exemplary analogy between the eternal communion of God and the market, nor is it a genealogical narrative that unites an account of the development (or lack thereof) of trinitarian thought with the emergence of capitalism, though these two approaches may have secondary roles in a holistic theology. No, the starting point of our theology of economics must be the work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit toward the redemption of the world operating undividedly in concursive actions throughout not only the market economy, but also all of creation. Only such an approach properly links the creative purpose of God with God’s self-revealing redemptive work in history. Our theology must be able to articulate the ways in which God acts toward the redemption of the Church through the market by common grace, facilitating increased communion with God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This account will necessarily include an explanation of how certain economic acts in which human and divine agency is coincident lead to a distinctive awareness of and personal relation to God as Father, Son, and Spirit through an account of how each person is manifest according to their proper mode of being. Thus,

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<sup>144</sup> William Perkins, *A Golden Chain*, in *The Work of William Perkins*, ed. Ian Breward (Berskhire, UK: The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1970), §6.

<sup>145</sup> Owen, *Communion*, 105.

particular coincident acts must be appropriated to Father, Son, and Spirit. A theology of the market must also be able to describe areas where human acts can hinder this communion, undermining common grace according to the permissive will of God in a way that Father, Son, and Spirit are neither revealed through human economic actions nor actively bringing their redemptive purposes to fruition. Only with these goals in mind will we be properly able to theologically speak about the market.

### CHAPTER 3 – ASPECTS OF DIVINE ACTION IN THE CREATED ORDER

What is truly predicated contingently of the divine persons has no correspondence of truth without an appropriate external term.

- Bernard Lonergan<sup>1</sup>

The scriptures speak of the “purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will” (Eph. 1:11), where it is clear that God wills that salvation comes to humankind (1 Tim. 2:4, 2 Pet. 3:9). Chapter 2 sought to describe how God works to accomplish all things indivisibly as Father, Son, and Spirit, and how in each indivisible act it is nevertheless still possible to be aware of distinctive aspects of the divine work that can be appropriated to Father, Son, and Spirit. Insofar as God wills that salvation come to humankind, we can reasonably expect God to work in all things toward salvation, either directly upon those who are being saved through special grace, or indirectly using those who deny God as a conduit for a common grace that orients creation toward salvation and contributes to redemptively significant transformation of believers living in the created order. Common grace is distinct from special grace in that the entire world is an object of this grace, serving as a conduit by which God helps to transform the body of believers to facilitate their communion with God, an awareness of God as Father, Son, and Spirit in the form of a personal relationship in the areas of knowledge and will between a believer and God. Common grace, therefore, designates that concurrent work of God and human persons within the market that tends toward the transformation of the faithful.

Common grace is not absolute in two ways. First, human sin may render the common grace of God ineffective as the permissive will of God allows human beings to

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<sup>1</sup> Lonergan, *Triune God: Systematics*, 441.

be the authors of their own undoing through sin. In such instances, God's redemptive plan and decretive will are not thwarted, though in these instances God does shift the application of grace toward the transformation of the Church away from common grace and toward special grace. Second, certain constructions of society or the market may hinder communion with God by making awareness of God as Father, Son, and Spirit more difficult to obtain. Such impediments to communion, while technically distinct from sinful actions, nevertheless indirectly resist common grace by counteracting its end. As will become clear in subsequent chapters, though markets depend upon human actions for their construction, they are enduring in such a way that they exercise a sort of agency of their own independent of human actions, having an objective reality contributing to the malformation of economic agents. The variability that the notions of common grace, special grace, sin, and hindered communion through rendering God hidden provides allows us to analyze possible formations of the market as either more completely the site of divine concurrent action in the world, or as a place of human refusal to participate in God's redemptive working. We need not speak of the market as purely a site of sin or of grace, but can instead seek aspects of sin, common grace, special grace, and hindered communion as facets of the complex intermingling of the divine and human economies.

These theological claims do not yet provide a means of theologically analyzing the economy in a manner that can yield both theological insights and viable economic proposals. To reach a point where such analysis is possible, we need an account of the immanent realities upon which the concurrent divine work of common grace supervenes, such that we can discern the role of these immanent realities in the economy. In short, I must connect three aspects of the indivisible divine work of redemption with three

created realities significant in the economy. By the end of the chapter, I will have developed three appropriated dimensions of the single divine work of transformation. The terms of the immanent action and the resulting dimensions of transformation will not be arbitrarily selected, but will be expressed in terms fitting the mode of agency proper to each hypostasis and in accordance with scriptural patterns of speech, as will become clear in subsequent chapters. I must again clearly state that these dimensions of transformation should not be interpreted as the basis for distinguishing the divine Persons.<sup>2</sup> These three dimensions must then be articulated in a way that is theologically faithful, but in a form capable of entering into dialogue with economic theory, and particularly with economic models. This is where the notion of divine action as supervenience is particularly helpful. To say that God's acts supervene upon the created order is to claim that God works through creation in such a way that both causal chains and free human choices are the means by which God accomplishes his will. While economic theory should not be expected to extensively engage in theological or philosophical discussion of divine acts, it is quite possible that some of the created realities that God supervenes upon to bring about transformation may very well be the sort of things economic theory attempts to describe in different terms. Therefore, the second task of the chapter is to articulate the three dimensions of transformation in terms amenable to engaging economic theory.

### **Three Dimensions of Redemptively Significant Transformation**

Chapters 1 and 2 both explored the possibility that certain formations of the market could transform an individual in a redemptively significant way and concluded

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<sup>2</sup> Here I am following Karl Barth's three criteria for the valid use of appropriations: (1) they must not be arbitrary; (2) they must not be the basis of distinguishing the persons, as each must in reality participate in the appropriated act; and (3) the terms appropriated must be Biblically derived. Barth, *Dogmatics* I.1, 429.

that such redemptively significant transformation must be theologically understood to be the result of divine action. When redemptively significant transformation is brought about through participation in the economy as a whole, I argued that we must understand this transformation as arising from common grace that is operative through the entirety of society, the beneficiaries of transformation and those whose hearts are hardened alike. This begins to provide a necessary degree of precision that will allow for a thorough analysis of the market and models describing it. However, additional clarity is required. Few of the numerous approaches to developing a theology of economics discussed in chapter 1 speak about the economy in the same manner. As a result it is challenging to see how to relate the various approaches to one another or to their various conclusions about redemptively significant transformation, and there are often misunderstandings between the approaches themselves when one perspective attempts to engage another.

One notable example of misunderstanding is found in a recent discussion between James K. A. Smith and J. David Richardson in the journal *Faith & Economics*. The two authors were charged with discussing globalization from theological and economic perspectives, respectively, in order to foster a helpful dialogue between the two disciplines. Unfortunately, in the initial papers and subsequent response papers the authors largely talked past one another, only establishing a common objective for discussion in the concluding remarks of the three stage discussion. In his initial arguments, Smith explored the “ecclesial critique” of globalization made by theologians who believe that economists see the world differently than theologians, with problematic consequences.<sup>3</sup> Richardson responds in frustration, complaining of Smith’s “refusal to

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<sup>3</sup> Smith, “Ecclesial Critique.”



envision, much less detail, alternative economic-globalization architectures.”<sup>4</sup>

Richardson’s first paper explores entirely different questions, asking whether or not it is true that globalization brings about good consequences, and then questioning whether or not these good consequences outweigh the bad.<sup>5</sup> Smith responds with a worry that Richardson simply takes “what is contingent as if it were natural.”<sup>6</sup> Though he is certainly concerned with ethical outcomes and true conceptions of the impact of globalization, Smith here again reveals that his main emphasis lies elsewhere. For Smith, the basic manner in which economists see the world must be addressed before questions of goodness and accuracy. Similar divergences in emphasis are evident in the various approaches treated in chapter 1, so it is imperative to classify these distinctions and to explain how they relate.

I find the most helpful means of distinguishing the basic emphases of different approaches in a set of terms developed by Jon Sobrino. Sobrino’s insight lies in adding the term “orthopathy” to the more traditional terms of orthodoxy and orthopraxis. Sobrino defines “orthopathy” as “the correct way of letting ourselves be affected by the reality of Christ.”<sup>7</sup> Sobrino’s distinction also provides a solid basis for understanding how these three approaches relate to redemptively significant transformation. Orthopathy, orthodoxy, and orthopraxis are three dimensions of the righteous life a Christian lives as empowered by the transformative work of God.

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<sup>4</sup> J. David Richardson, "Globalization and the Common Good: An Initial Response to Smith," *Faith & Economics*, 56 (Fall 2010): 54.

<sup>5</sup> J. David Richardson, "Globalization and the Common Good: An Economist’s Account for Skeptical Scholars," *Faith & Economics*, 56 (Fall 2010): 21-45.

<sup>6</sup> James K. A. Smith, "Evaluating the Good: A Reply to Richardson," *Faith & Economics*, 56 (Fall 2010), 48.

<sup>7</sup> Jon Sobrino, *Christ*, 210.

Years of theological reflection on the role of spirituality in liberation theology lie behind Sobrino's fairly simple definition of orthopathy, and a brief survey on this history will clarify the relationship among the three terms. In his *Christology at the Crossroads*, Sobrino clearly articulated the relationship between orthodoxy and orthopraxis. On the one hand, Sobrino presents orthopraxis, or right practice, as the concretization of orthodoxy, a means of overcoming "abstract orthodoxy" through concrete praxis.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, there is a sense in which orthopraxis has "ultimate supremacy" over orthodoxy. Sobrino claims that this is because "the contents of orthodoxy are limit-realities," that is, concepts not directly accessible to human insight.<sup>9</sup> When orthodoxy is understood in terms of limit-concepts, revelation cannot directly manifest God to the believer. Fortunately, Sobrino argues that God is revealed "in action," not as "abstract knowledge."<sup>10</sup> "Only in the *praxis* of following him [Jesus] do we glimpse the mental categories that will enable us to understand the real nature of the kingdom of God and formulate it in a meaningful way."<sup>11</sup>

The distinctions between orthodoxy and orthopraxis in Sobrino are at this stage clear. For Sobrino orthodoxy is abstract, referring to conceptual knowledge, while orthopraxis is concrete, referring to actions that allow one to follow Jesus and thus to understand the action through which God's self-revelation occurs. However, at this early stage Sobrino already is gesturing toward a third term, orthopathy, when he claims that what is known about limit-realities "cannot be separated from the historical experiences

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<sup>8</sup> Jon Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads: A Latin American Approach*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1976), 390.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 390. Sobrino claims that the nature of orthodoxy as limit-concept is only an "elementary philosophical reason" for the priority of orthopraxis, though he discerns more sophisticated scriptural and theological reasons for his claims. Ibid., 60.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 391.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 60. Emphasis in original.

that allow us to make general formulations that are reasonable.”<sup>12</sup> Here he points to the example of how the claim that Christ is the way to the Father can only be understood in light of following Jesus. At this stage Sobrino does not yet clearly distinguish between experience and practice, but the foundations for his three terms are in place.

By the time that *Spirituality of Liberation* is written, Sobrino begins to develop a clearer notion of what experience is and how it differs from praxis. The fact that “there is such a thing as a Christian practice of liberation” leads Sobrino to claim that “there must be a spirituality underlying this practice.”<sup>13</sup> Spirituality, which Sobrino defines as the subject in relation to the whole of historical reality, is distinguished from praxis.<sup>14</sup> Spirituality entails “doing *what* Jesus did,” but also and more importantly doing it “*as* Jesus did it.”<sup>15</sup> There is something beyond the praxis itself, a specific orientation of the act that Sobrino will ultimately call honesty about the real and fidelity to the real. If we are not honest about the real, things lose their “capacity to function as sacraments of transcendence,”<sup>16</sup> but if we are honest, and if we have fidelity to that honesty, hope and love allow us to “correspond to the ‘more’ that is in reality.”<sup>17</sup> Sobrino’s language concerning “sacraments of transcendence” and of “corresponding to the ‘more’” in reality point beyond mere praxis, though Sobrino clearly implies that true spirituality cannot be divorced from orthopraxis.

In *Christ the Liberator*, a significantly later work, Sobrino finally fully explains his distinction between orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy. He is insistent that there

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 390.

<sup>13</sup> Jon Sobrino, *Spirituality*, 13.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 7. Emphasis in original.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 17.

are three aspects of the gospel of Christ that the Christian must respond to in three different ways. Jesus' gospel of the kingdom of God requires orthopraxis as believers continue in acts of the sort that Jesus initiated. The gospel also requires orthodoxy as one trusts in Christ's death and resurrection. Sobrino sees a third aspect of the gospel "which is not adequately brought about by the other two alone." Jesus has a certain "manner of being in his service to the Kingdom of God, and in his relationship to the Father" that requires Christians to respond in orthopathy. The Christian is not merely called to believe certain things and to act in certain ways. He or she is also called to believe and to act in the same way with a similar manner. Sobrino points to how Jesus "is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters" (Heb. 2:11), a fundamental mindset that in itself is good news apart from any specific act that Jesus does on our behalf and apart from his death and resurrection that we respond to in orthodoxy.<sup>18</sup> The full good news recognizes Jesus' manner of being, the *how* of his love, and calls Christians to imitation of the same.

With these insights, we can now fully explain Sobrino's term orthopathy. Orthopathy indicates a broad and fundamental kind of orientation to God and the world, what Sobrino often refers to in short-hand as "the real." This orientation is neither cognitional, as rational reflection on specific doctrines or historical truth-claims, nor active, as fulfilled in the doing of certain actions. It does not consist of propositional ideas or concrete actions. Rather, and here I begin to drift from Sobrino's use of the concept, orthopathy requires one to inhabit a pre-reflective orientation toward the world, an orientation that makes certain acts possible and renders possible acts significant in particular ways. Such an orientation is pre-reflective in the sense that it is not yet the object of rational analysis, but its pre-reflective nature should not be taken to indicate that

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<sup>18</sup> Jon Sobrino, *Christ*, 210-211.

orthopathy has no bearing on human consciousness. Instead, the orthopathy (or lack thereof) gestures toward an awareness that is frequently taken for granted, but that simultaneously plays a determinative role in shaping our rational thought and volitional action. Moving again to more closely follow Sobrino, we can say that the orientation is one that allows us to adopt the same manner of being as Jesus in such a way that the how of our actions can mirror Jesus' how, so that we act as Jesus acts and believe as Jesus believes but with a self-awareness of how our acts and beliefs fit into the coming of the kingdom of God. Doing the same acts as Jesus is insufficient if we do not do them as Jesus does, that is, having a similar awareness of the way that these right acts correspond to reality. This orientation is made possible by a set of experiences, and these experiences in turn render a certain significance to human actions and beliefs that might otherwise be lacking, an added dimension to the mere undertaking of a right action or trust through proper belief.

Sobrino's distinction between orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy is helpful in a number of ways. First, it can serve to distinguish both the conclusions and the methods of the various perspectives discussed in chapter 1 so that it is possible to incorporate the various disparate approaches into a single analysis without requiring the groups to abandon their distinctive characteristics. Different theologians conclude that the market is potentially a means of encouraging orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and/or orthopathy, implying that God must somehow work through the economy insofar as right thinking, doing, and experiencing is not possible apart from divine action. Others claim that the market fundamentally distorts human beings to prevent their living in orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and/or orthopathy, suggesting that human beings can somehow reject God's work

through the economy. Once these three terms are distinguished it is easier to relate various approaches to one another and to clarify certain attempts at dialogue across the borders of the above perspectives. For example, we can suggest that Richardson's papers privilege something akin to orthodoxy and orthopraxis, emphasizing right knowledge and moral outcomes, while Smith emphasizes orthopathy, the pre-reflective perspective we must take when engaging the economy.

Second, the distinction between orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy allows me to connect the various forms of redemptively significant transformation within the economy to chapter 2's discussion of appropriated divine action. In part, this will require me to push back against the sharp distinction that Sobrino appears to draw between orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy. For example, by emphasizing limit realities, Sobrino seems to reduce orthodoxy to a conceptual affair, neglecting the doxological elements that are the etymological source for the word orthodoxy itself, apparently relegating these instead to the domain of orthopathy. A sharp distinction between these three realities is untenable. Because the act of knowing is in a certain sense praxis, orthodoxy is not perfectly divisible from orthopraxis, just as the connection between right knowledge and right worship undermines too sharp a distinction between orthodoxy and orthopathy. Nevertheless, some conceptual distinctions between what is ultimately indivisible can be drawn here. Orthodoxy, orthopathy, and orthopraxis must be understood as distinct dimensions of an undivided divine work of transformation still wrought on believers by Father, Son, and Spirit in distinctive ways.

Orthopathy, orthodoxy, and orthopraxis can serve as conceptual distinctions that allow us to better recognize the unique yet indivisible contributions of Father, Son, and

Spirit in redemptively significant transformation. In dialogue with Sobrino, I have suggested that orthopathy allows certain particular actions and ideas to be possible. As is frequently made clear in the gospels, Jesus is able to “proclaim good news to the poor” (Luke 4:18) because he first has compassion on them (i.e. Matt. 9:26, 14:14, Mark 6:32-34). Jesus’ acts are possible based on a certain pre-reflective awareness of the created value of all human beings. Jesus sees them as his Father in heaven sees them, based not on social status or outward appearance but based on their hearts (1 Sam. 16:17, Luke 16:15). Insofar as orthopathy is the source of orthodoxy and orthopraxis in this respect, we can properly appropriate it to the Father, the source of all divine action. Similarly, insofar as orthopraxis perfects the revelation of God manifest in orthodoxy, it can properly be appropriated to the Holy Spirit, the perfecter of all divine works. Finally, deviating from Sobrino’s understanding of the relationship between orthodoxy and orthopraxis, I will argue that orthodoxy can be seen as a means of preserving orthopraxis, ensuring the ongoing actualization of right action. Therefore, it can properly be appropriated to the Son, in whom all the divine works are actualized. These three dimensions of redemptively significant transformation in the market conform to the pattern established by Gregory of Nyssa, and, as will be shown in subsequent chapters, the pattern of appropriations I am suggesting here follows scriptural patterns of speech.

Treating orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy as appropriated aspects of the unified and undivided divine work of transformation accomplished on the Church through common grace operative within the market overcomes the potential objection to Sobrino’s trichotomy noted above: there are countless ways of muddying the waters by objecting to a strong distinction between thinking, doing, and experiencing. Since at least

the time of Karl Marx it has been necessary to admit that thinking and sensing are both forms of acting.<sup>19</sup> Equally relevant is Michael Polanyi's idea of a tacit knowledge comprised of an embodied awareness that manifests itself as a certain skill or ability. Acting may thus be spoken of as a form of knowledge.<sup>20</sup> Examples could go on, but it is clear that no pure distinction between knowing, doing, and experiencing/desiring is possible. If the distinction between orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy were treated as real distinctions based in theoretical knowledge of three discrete elements of human religious life, then the untenable nature of such a pure distinction between knowing, doing, and acting would undermine the helpfulness of Sobrino's terminology. However, if orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy are understood to be three conceptual distinctions within an undivided divine work of transformation then the problem is minimized. Given the fact that the *opera dei ad extra indivisa sunt*, we should not be surprised that the three dimensions of this divine work of transformation cannot be divided. I do not intend to draw an inviolable distinction between action, knowledge, and experience as the basis for analyzing the economy. However, given that the end goal of the undivided divine work is communion of the saints with God, and given that such communion requires distinctive awareness of Father, Son, and Spirit through distinctive appropriated aspects of the undivided divine work, it is perfectly acceptable to speak of a distinction between orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy. These three terms are conceptual distinctions used to describe the immanent dimensions of a transformed human life brought about by divine action. The more closely the concurrent divine and

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<sup>19</sup> Especially thesis 5. Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 5 (New York: International Publishers, 1976), 6-10.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Polanyi, *Knowing and Being*, ed. Marjorie Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).



human works align in their *telos*, the more properly we can speak of orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy as the human manifestations of the divine work of transformation, which is to say as the aspects of human life on which the divine work of redemption supervenes.

Returning briefly to the notion of supervenience, it must be noted that divine action in the world can be considered from the perspective of God or from the perspective of creation. From the perspective of God, a discussion could emphasize the divine motives for God's work in a particular area, the philosophical plausibility of God acting within the world, and the basis in God-given revelation for identifying any particular reality as a divine work. Such discussions are important, but they are less clearly related to economic theory. From the perspective of creation, analysis begins with the immanent terms within the created order that God supervenes upon when acting in creation. These elements can take the form of created realities that may be frequently discussed in the social sciences, but here theology reveals that these created realities must also be spoken of as acts of the Triune God. Such created realities are the immanent terms of supervenient divine action, but such divine action is not reducible to these immanent realities. The benefit of focusing on the immanent aspects of divine action when discussing a theology of economics is that these aspects can be directly correlated with the subject matter of economic theory.<sup>21</sup> Only through such correlation can theology provide insights capable of changing economics itself.

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<sup>21</sup> This correlation should not be taken to imply that the created order can be univocally related to God. Rather, it suggests that the immanent aspects of divine action can be univocally related to other immanent realities within the created order. Insofar as divine action always exceeds the immanent reality on which it supervenes, knowledge of God must always exceed what is known of the immanent terms coincident with the divine actions.

With this in mind, I turn now to the task of identifying created realities on which God superveniently acts to bring about redemptively significant transformation within the economy. I will develop three created realities corresponding to the three dimensions of transformation: orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy. Each of these realities can be appropriated to the Son, the Spirit, and the Father in a manner mirroring the appropriation of orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy to each of the divine Persons. However, divine action is not reducible to any one of these realities or even to all three in combination. The three created realities are simply the immanent terms of concurrent divine action that are most easily relatable to both the divine work of transformation through common grace and to the economic practice of modeling that will be the focus of the final three chapters.

### **The Immanent Terms of the Divine Work of Transformation**

#### *Recognition, Norms, and the Work of the Holy Spirit*

Among recent systematic theologians, Kevin Hector provides perhaps the most intriguing account of the immanent terms of the divine action of the Holy Spirit.<sup>22</sup> For this reason his work serves as an excellent starting point in our quest to identify the immanent terms of the undivided divine work of transformation. Hector's *Theology Without Metaphysics* develops what he calls a therapeutic and non-metaphysical theory of language use to defend the possibility of speaking about God against theologians such as Jean Luc Marion and John D. Caputo who fear that language directed towards God results in a form of violence against God. For Marion, the concern is that theological

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<sup>22</sup> It is perhaps a reinterpretation to suggest that Hector's account refers only to the immanent aspects of a supervenient and concurrent divine action. Hector himself does not address such concerns, which may, in fact, be excluded *prima facie* from a non-metaphysical theology.

language can result in idolatry instead of iconography, where an idol is that which closes the horizon and turns the gaze upon itself. Such idols therefore are forms of knowledge of God that constrain God *per impossibile*, which is to say they cause us to speak not about God but about a constrained “god”, a mere projection.<sup>23</sup> Marion believes we can only think about God “under the figure of the unthinkable.”<sup>24</sup> God is love without condition or restraint, so in loving we can move “beyond the limit of a concept... but also beyond the limit of every condition whatsoever.”<sup>25</sup> For Marion, language is a limit that must be exceeded in order to overcome idolatry. Caputo worries about “the violence theology perpetrates on God”<sup>26</sup> by making God “fall victim” to “anterior conditions.”<sup>27</sup> While Caputo follows Marion in certain respects,<sup>28</sup> arguing that both Heidegger and Aquinas “subject God to the anteriority of being with equal violence,”<sup>29</sup> he also wonders whether Marion’s theology of the icon and of love is nothing more than an alternative set of anterior conditions.<sup>30</sup> Ultimately, Caputo urges the reader to “give in to the violence of discourse, the violence that discourse is... God does not speak... So there can be no question of claiming access to the language God himself favors.”<sup>31</sup> Language inevitably constrains God, doing violence against God, but this is unavoidable and therefore to be embraced.

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<sup>23</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, second ed., trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 25-6.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 48-9.

<sup>26</sup> John D. Caputo, “How to Avoid Speaking of God: The Violence of Natural Theology,” in *Prospects for Natural Theology*, ed. Eugene Thomas Long (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992), 130.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>28</sup> Caputo emphasizes the theme of language as “violence” more than Marion.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-7, 141. “Marion has not found anything nonviolent, anything that is innocent of the originary, ontological violence of which I spoke in the beginning, the violence that belongs structurally to, indeed that constitutes, language itself.” *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

Hector rightly recognizes that both Caputo's and Marion's arguments assume a correspondentist essentialist account of language, where Marion fears that our words correspond to idols and seeks a way around such idolatry, while Caputo fears that any act corresponding God to a mental category (where such mental categories are inescapably linguistic) uses an anterior condition to violently constrain God. These concerns could be overcome through what Hector calls a therapy, that is through an account of how language need not operate in a correspondentist essentialist manner so that speaking of God is not corresponding God to an idol, nor constraining God within an anterior condition. In contrast to and Marion and Caputo, Hector hopes that his therapy can salvage a form of positive theology, a participation in God's talk about God. His non-metaphysical account of language suggests concept use commits the user to "normative assessment"<sup>32</sup> to determine whether concept use goes on "in the same way as precedent uses."<sup>33</sup> In other words,

in using a concept, one intends one's own usage to be recognizable as such by those whom one recognizes as users of the concept, and one intends this by trying to use it in the same way as certain precedents.<sup>34</sup>

Valid concept use is concept use recognizable as such by those who already use the same concepts. In this way, Hector escapes correspondentism and essentialism by substituting a "reciprocal-recognition"<sup>35</sup> process for the notion that applying a concept "assimilate[s] that object to an antecedently defined, essence-like category."<sup>36</sup> For Hector, norms do not entail that the resulting concepts used actually do *correspond* to the *essence* of a thing,

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<sup>32</sup> Kevin Hector, *Theology without Metaphysics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 54.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

and so he believes that he has sidestepped Marion and Caputo's concerns. There is no longer a need to fear that words somehow attempt to bind the unbounded essence of God through the violent application of an antecedent category.

Hector further develops his theory of theological concept use by explaining that theological language is a particularly Trinitarian affair in which the Holy Spirit "norms one's usage through a process of mutual recognition" determining whether the current concept use carries on the trajectory initiated by Jesus Christ, "who is the standard by which to determine whether one's performances conform to God."<sup>37</sup> In other words, if proper use of a word entails using that word in a fashion that continues a trajectory of precedent uses, then such a trajectory is only possible through the norming work of the Holy Spirit. This account builds upon Freidrich Schleiermacher's notion that the Spirit circulates within *Gefühl* ("feeling"), a "pre-reflective" attunement that provides intuitive direction to knowing and doing,<sup>38</sup> and upon Karl Barth's notion that language about God must be "an intra-triune affair" such that "to know God properly is to participate in God's knowledge of Godself."<sup>39</sup> Schleiermacher's *Gefühl* allows Hector to connect his non-essentialist, non-correspondentist account of language to the work of the Spirit. In this account, theological language is language whose norms of use originate, pre-reflectively (i.e. without conscious deliberation), through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Schleiermacher, on Hector's account, sees *Gefühl* as a collective matter, conditioned by a

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 78-94.

<sup>39</sup> Hector, *Metaphysics*, 127. For Barth, this fact proceeds partly from the reality that the divine self-revelation is nothing distinct from the Triune God, and partly from the fact that the doctrine of revelation itself is the ground of the doctrine of the Trinity. Revelation does not reveal anything except insofar as revelation is itself the self-revelation of the Triune God as Revealer, Revelation, and Revealedness. In Barth's own words, "if human language claims to be proclamation, that can only mean that it claims to serve the Word of God, to point to its having previously been spoken through God Himself." Barth, *Dogmatics* I.1, 57.

“we-consciousness” that conforms an individual’s attunement to that of a religious community.<sup>40</sup> If norms are derived from recognition, and if the type of recognition operative within theological language use is Spirit controlled, then the norms are themselves the work of the Spirit. Barth, in Hector’s reading of him, was similarly concerned that God can never fit in human linguistic categories, but Barth overcomes this worry by suggesting that our application of theological concepts to God must be a participation in God’s knowledge of himself such that human speaking of God is a practice of grace.<sup>41</sup> Barth’s insight applies to Hector’s model because the norm that the Spirit carries forward originates in the historical utterances of Jesus. Therefore, when someone speaks about God within this trajectory according to Spirit-inspired norms, she does so as a continuation of God’s talk about God as empowered by God. To speak of God is to speak to the Father in the trajectory of Christ, according to the norms carried on in the Spirit.

What would it look like to assess a theological claim using the theory of language provided by Hector? Let us consider an illustration from the theology of economics to clarify Hector’s pneumatological theory of language use. Gustavo Gutiérrez argues that “the liberation of Israel is a political action,”<sup>42</sup> a paradigmatic event continued in the salvation offered by Christ, where “the struggle for a just society is in its own right very much a part of salvation history.”<sup>43</sup> The struggle for such a just society, Gutiérrez argues, requires that Latin American nations be freed from their dependence on and domination

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<sup>40</sup> Hector, *Metaphysics*, 80-81.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 126-9.

<sup>42</sup> Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, 155.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

by great capitalist countries and multinational corporations.<sup>44</sup> Christ must be seen as liberator, and growth of the kingdom of God must be seen in part as “a process which occurs historically *in* liberation.”<sup>45</sup> In Hector’s account of theological language, Gutiérrez’s claims would be justified if they met at least two conditions. First, they must be recognized as continuing a trajectory of theological talk about God and the kingdom that began with Jesus of Nazareth (perhaps with his claim that he was sent “to proclaim release to the captives” in Luke 4:18) and continued through centuries of faithful discipleship. Second, the individuals who recognized Gutiérrez as carrying on in the same manner as the precedent usage of Christ must have themselves been recognized as rightly carrying on in the spirit of Jesus’ speech by other individuals who were equally recognized as being in the chain by their predecessors, and so forth in continuity all the way back to Jesus himself. Of course, this precedent chain does not require that we are able to trace a specific series of moments where successive authorities analyzed and affirmed one another. We need only posit that the pre-reflective norms circulating within a particular group were passed from one generation to the next through mutual recognition and through assimilation into a particular “we-consciousness” governed by the same normative orientation present in the community established by Jesus of Nazareth. Gutiérrez’s claims are not valid, therefore, on the condition that the kingdom of God corresponds in its essence to an act of liberation, but rather on the condition that in speaking of liberation Gutiérrez is empowered by the Holy Spirit to speak in a similar fashion as Jesus but within a new context. Conversely, if Gutiérrez’s speech does not “pick out” the same reality in the same manner, and if it deviates from the historical

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 177. Emphasis in original.

trajectory and is not therefore recognized as carrying on in the manner established by Christ, then his claim would not be a participation in God's talk about God and would therefore be invalid. I will return to this example again in due course, but for now the point is adequately made.

Before moving to a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of Hector's proposal, I should note from the start that I intend to table the questions of metaphysics and language. It should be quite obvious that I engage throughout this work in metaphysics in a number of ways that potentially exceed what would be permissible given Hector's theory of language use, but the nature and validity of metaphysics in general and in relation to theology in particular remains outside of the scope of this work. What is important in Hector's work as related to the current project is not his conclusion regarding metaphysics but rather his depiction of the pneumatological basis of language use wherein the Holy Spirit is operative through intersubjective norms. Hector can be entirely wrong about metaphysics and/or correspondentist essentialist accounts of truth, but still quite insightful in terms of the mechanisms through which language is learned, how language evolves, and what role norms play in language use. Norms provide us with the immanent term that can place the appropriated action of the Holy Spirit in dialogue with economic models and theory. Language use is but one human action, one example of human doing, one element of praxis, and hence the immanent term which is the basis of our appropriation of orthopraxis to the Holy Spirit.<sup>46</sup> In sidestepping the question of

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<sup>46</sup> Admittedly, language serves as a unique example of praxis insofar as language itself is connected to the symbols and signifiers which form the basis of both orthodoxy, and to a degree, orthopathy. We can neither sharply nor completely distinguish between language as practice, language as knowledge, and language as a constitutive element of experience. Nevertheless, despite the interconnected nature of language and orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy, the intersubjective norms which Hector offers as the basis of his theory of language will more easily



metaphysics, I do not intend to dismiss the importance of Hector's primary concern as much as to recognize the potential benefits of applying his basic insights elsewhere. As I do not find myself convinced that I am inflicting violence upon God through theological language as in the thought of Marion or Caputo, I instead prefer to focus on the fact that, in Hector, language use is a practice.<sup>47</sup> Thus, Hector speaks of "the practice of taking true,"<sup>48</sup> "the practice of reference,"<sup>49</sup> and of an overall "normative-pragmatic explanation of concept use."<sup>50</sup> If language use is a practice, presumably Hector's insights may be equally applicable to other practices, especially economic practices.

Hector's pneumatology of recognition is not only appealing for its potential application to concerns of praxis, but also because it has merit on Biblical grounds and on the grounds of the Reformed theological tradition. Biblically speaking, the Spirit is often depicted as anointing the prophets in their commission to preach (Is. 61:1; cf. 2 Pet. 1:21), and the Spirit's role is clearly described as guiding us to all truth (John 16:13). The Spirit is thus clearly connected to theological concept use and even more broadly to human action in particular (Rom. 8:14, Gal. 5:16). The Scriptures at least allow for recognition's role in determining the Spirit's presence insofar as we are compelled to test the spirits (1 John 4:1-3) and to recognize true and false prophets by their fruit (Matt. 7:16). These notions suggest that Hector is not doing violence to the tradition in developing a pneumatology centered on recognition and applied to concept use. As I will

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relate to the question of practice and, hence, orthopraxy, which this project appropriates to the Holy Spirit. The reader must remember, however, that the very idea of appropriation grants that the action of the Spirit is not sharply and completely divisible with the action of the Father and the Son, such that the difficult entanglements discussed between knowledge, practice, and experience in the particular case of language do not undermine the basic approach of this project.

<sup>47</sup> One might say I am not in need of the therapy that Hector offers.

<sup>48</sup> Hector, *Metaphysics*, 213.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

argue more extensively in chapter 6, I am convinced that Hector's proposal actually conforms quite well to certain aspects of the Biblical witness.

Within the Reformed tradition, I also find affinities between Hector's proposal and the Reformed notion of common grace that I have presented as the theological basis for any claim that communion with God arises in part through the economy as a result of divine action. According to the doctrine of common grace, the Holy Spirit is active in the life of every human through common grace whereby all human talents are preserved and developed and sin is restrained.<sup>51</sup> Only in special grace is grace given to the elect in such a way that they are united with Christ unto salvation through the Spirit's power. If we suggest that the Spirit plays a role in norming human action, then common grace becomes a logical necessity insofar as it is impossible to exclude those outside of the Church from being influenced in some way by the redemptively significant norms active in society, even if the force of these norms is much smaller outside of the Church body and not efficacious toward salvation for all who contribute to the shaping of such norms. This is but another way of arguing that if redemptively significant transformation occurs within the market (in this instance as a result of reciprocal-recognition and norms), then we must theologically speak of this transformation as arising from grace. Conversely, if we affirm the proposed view of common grace, then we can say one of the main differences between the Spirit's agency within the Church and outside of the Church

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<sup>51</sup> Whereas my account focuses on all three persons of the Trinity, common grace is often particularly and especially seen as an appropriated work of the Spirit. For example, consider Abraham Kuyper's thought on the pneumatological basis of all human talents. Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Henri De Vries (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1900), 46. Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2007), 153.

through these norms is the recognition of the Spirit as such an agent by those within the Church.<sup>52</sup>

Given these scriptural and traditional supports for Hector's view, one important weakness deserves serious consideration. Hector's description of the Trinitarian nature of concept use could be misappropriated to support certain modalistic tendencies within the Church. This is not to say that Hector is a modalist; anyone familiar with his broader works will find such a conclusion untenable.<sup>53</sup> However, insofar as Hector primarily attributes to Jesus the role of offering a historical and paradigmatic reference to God<sup>54</sup> which initiates the trajectory of the chain and serves as the standard to determine if our concept use conforms to God,<sup>55</sup> and insofar as Hector seems to attribute no active role to the Father in said concept use, it would be easy to interpret God as acting in theological concept use in three successive stages with Christ initiating valid concept use in the past,

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<sup>52</sup> Here again Leonard Hodgson's distinction between possession by God and communion with God is helpful in clarifying how the Spirit's activity in common grace differs from the Spirit's activity in special grace. According to Hodgson, communion with God entails an awareness of speaking to an other, but possession is the escalation of one's abilities without awareness of such an other. Situating this within Hector's proposal, common grace is active outside of the church insofar as any norms will inevitably have social influence outside of the community within which those norms originate, and so all humanity has been influenced in some way by the norms that the Spirit creates within the Church. Conversely, norms originating outside of the Church will inevitably have influence within the church. Common grace is in this respect a sort of possession of those outside the Church who serve as a conduit of grace for the benefit of the Church. But within the Church, these norms are rooted in recognition that the Spirit is personally active as the basis of the norm, and so special grace is manifest through these norms in part because this recognition moves beyond possession and into communion. Leonard Hodgson, *Trinity*, 39-40.

<sup>53</sup> For example, in addressing Paul Molnar and Bruce McCormack's interpretations of Barth, Hector insists that "God's being is never of an *indeterminate* character" but is always determinate in the "decision of God in the movement of Father, Son, and Spirit, such that triunity is *logically necessary* to this self-determination." There is neither a temporal nor a logical manner in which God can be seen in any way other than as Father, Son, and Spirit. One cannot think of a more clear rejection of modalism. Kevin Hector, "God's Triunity and Self-Determination," in *Trinity and Election in Contemporary Theology*, ed. Michael T. Dempsey (Grand Rapids, MI: Willaim B. Eerdmans, 2011), 42-3.

<sup>54</sup> Hector, *Metaphysics*, 178.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 96, 199, 231.

the Spirit sustaining the trajectory of such uses in the present, and the Father being active at most only in an eschatological future in which we may hope these trajectories attain a sort of beatific vision and discursive communion with God.<sup>56</sup> This succession of three different stages in which God acts in three different ways was the basis of the heresy of modalism, and the contemporaneous activity of the three Persons was the main defense against this mistake.<sup>57</sup> Chapter 2 also argued that such contemporaneous action is vital to any account of divine action, which would include any pneumatological role in the transmission of norms (linguistic or otherwise).

In light of this risk, though Hector is certainly no modalist, his proposal would be better off if it clearly articulated the distinctive and simultaneous roles of Father, Son, and Spirit in concept use to mitigate the risk of introducing a foothold for modalism within our notion of God-empowered human action. It will certainly also be more useful within the current project if a role for the Father and the Son can be discerned in the present. Fortunately, I believe that Hector has certain elements within his proposal that can be modified, in the trajectory of his precedent concept use, to overcome these shortcomings by introducing a stronger Trinitarian dimension that simultaneously makes better sense of human action, including language. I intend now to tease out these elements.

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<sup>56</sup> At the very least, we can say that it is unclear precisely how current communion with God as Father, Son, and Spirit would be possible through language use and/or through any other practices which Hector might grant followed a similar account to that which he offers for language use.

<sup>57</sup> In Tertullian, this takes the form of a prolonged discussion of all the Biblical examples of the Father and Son acting together, or one toward the other (see chs. 9-13, 22 and especially 23). In Hippolytus, this takes the form of distinguishing between the ways that the Father, Son, and Spirit act together. So the Father commands, the Son obeys, and the Spirit gives understanding. The Father is above all, the Son through all, and the Spirit in all. The Father wills, the Son does, and the Spirit manifests (sec. 14). Hippolytus, "Against the Heresy of Noetus," in *Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Vol. IX*, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Edinburgh, UK: T&T Clark, 1869). Tertullian, "Adversus Praxean," in *Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Vol. XV*, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1870).

*Social Imaginaries and the Work of the Father*

A constructive expansion of Hector's proposal might begin by noting a dimension of human experience of the world that seems largely overlooked in *Theology Without Metaphysics*. Hector explains that to intend a meaning is to invite normative assessment in hopes that the use of a concept is recognizable as such by an individual recognized as having normative authority.<sup>58</sup> On this account, norms are entirely intersubjective phenomena rooted in reciprocal-recognition. However, it is important to acknowledge that any particular action, and this is especially the case in concept use, is only intelligible within a certain frame of reference that I will call the social imaginary. I prefer the definition offered by Charles Taylor, who defines the social imaginary as

the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations.<sup>59</sup>

James K.A. Smith offers a helpful clarification when he notes that a social imaginary is about "how we *imagine* the world before we ever think about it."<sup>60</sup> The idea of a social imaginary originated with Cornelius Castoriadis, who used it as a means of moving beyond the strong materialism found in the Marxist thought contemporary with his

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<sup>58</sup> Hector, *Metaphysics*, 61.

<sup>59</sup> Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 23.

<sup>60</sup> Smith, *Desiring*, 66. My use of Taylor will ultimately be slightly different than Smith's insofar as I will consider the social imaginary as that which brings about the possibility of the perpetuation of pneumatologically enabled trajectories and also the possibility of a continuing encounter with God. Smith tends to focus on the latter aspect in his reading of Taylor, couched in the terms of an existential framework and discussions of meaning and significance. The different in emphasis is largely due to the different ends to which we deploy Taylor, not due to a fundamental disagreement that I may have with Smith. See James K.A. Smith *How (Not) to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2014).

writing. According to Castoriadis, the “social-historical” is not reducible to intersubjective networks nor to institutions. He thus eschews the typical base/superstructure dichotomy offered by many forms of Marxism.<sup>61</sup> Castoriadis instead suggests that a network of symbols makes any human action and thus history itself possible,<sup>62</sup> and that institutions themselves have drawn their source from an imaginary, a network of symbols and ideas that makes the very instantiation of institutions themselves intelligible.<sup>63</sup> This imaginary will be vital to the task of expanding Hector’s proposal.

For Castoriadis society cannot be understood exclusively in material or functional terms because society is constantly constructing its own needs and pursuits, toward which the material and institutional aspects of society then develop.<sup>64</sup> This symbolic construction of needs yields a material consequence which may fulfill a function, but the function itself is not the ultimate explanation insofar as this very function is not natural but needs explanation. Yet, the notion of a social imaginary is not a sort of idealism. Idealism is a pure extraction of ideas from other factors, but the idea of a social imaginary is meant to indicate that the material actions and structures that constitute a society contain within themselves a certain idea that makes the very practices intelligible.<sup>65</sup> Action and idea are inseparable, and so the social imaginary stands as a sort

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<sup>61</sup> Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1987), 108-113.

<sup>62</sup> Here Castoriadis mentions both economic and non-economic acts: “work, consumption, war, love, child-bearing.” Ibid., 117. Compare with Charles Taylor’s claim: The social imaginary is “what enables, through making sense of, the practices of a society.” Charles Taylor, *Imaginations*, 2.

<sup>63</sup> Institutions are, after all, typically socially constructed realities with a sort of material footprint. The assemblage of a particular subset of material components of an institution only counts as such given a larger symbolic network that makes the institution as such intelligible. Castoriadis, *Institution*, 131.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 135. Castoriadis suggests that the questions posed by the social imaginary are *de facto* answered in the doings of society, Ibid., 147.

<sup>65</sup> Castoriadis, *Institution*, 21. Taylor, *Imaginations*, 32.

of ambiguous middle ground between knowledge and action.<sup>66</sup> As a precondition of action, the social imaginary is nevertheless not fully distinguishable from action insofar as action sustains and perpetuates a particular imaginary. As a precondition to our thoughts and ideas, the social imaginary always exceeds our full definition and understanding,<sup>67</sup> and it always contains within it certain elements that impress upon our conscious thought but which are not themselves conscious ideas. In the words of Arjun Appadurai, social imaginaries are “a constitutive feature of modern subjectivity.”<sup>68</sup> Through the social imaginary, a given subject can conceive of various “imagined worlds,”<sup>69</sup> which allows an individual to orient their agency within “globally defined fields of possibility.”<sup>70</sup> To use Hector’s terminology, social imaginaries determine which future trajectories are possible when continuing a chain of precedent concept uses.

Let us return to the above example of Gustavo Gutiérrez’s theology to illustrate how a social imaginary complements Hector’s proposal to allow us to better interpret the truthfulness of a theological claim. Hector would suggest that Gutiérrez’s theology is a participation in God’s talk about God if it is recognized as carrying on a precedent trajectory initiated by the incarnate Son of God. If the trajectory continues to participate in God’s talk about God, then the norms that facilitate such a trajectory must be understood as the work of the Spirit, which Hector, following Schleiermacher, describes

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<sup>66</sup> Indeed, one important contribution that Castoriadis makes to the notion of a social imaginary is to provide a means of explaining aspects of the social-historical that cannot be completely reconstructed on the grounds of a Hegelian notion of the development of reason, or on the grounds of a functionalist explanation of the nature of social actions. Philippe Caumières, *Castoriadis: Le projet d'autonomie* (Paris: Éditions Michalon, 2007), 68.

<sup>67</sup> Castoriadis summarizes helpfully: “It is only through the world that one can think the world.” Castoriadis, *Institution*, 106.

<sup>68</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 3.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

in terms of *Gefühl*. This is all well and good, but it is missing an important component of what it would mean for Gutiérrez to continue a precedent chain of concept-use.

Gutiérrez's claims that Christ is liberator and that the kingdom of God unfolds in the historical process of liberation compel him to call for the liberation of Latin American nations from their exploitation by and dependence upon major capitalist nations and multi-national corporations. However, neither the nation-state nor the corporation is purely an empirical reality. In fact, nation-states are, in the words of Benedict Anderson, "imagined communities."<sup>71</sup> According to Anderson, as vernacular languages replaced Latin as the language of court across Europe, and particularly as these languages circulated through "print capitalism," the vernacularization allowed individual Europeans to imagine themselves as part of nations of fellow men and women who spoke the same language. These imagined communities made possible ideas, acts, and discussions of nationalism. Anderson's example illustrates the connection between particular ideas (a language-based nation of people) and particular social and material developments (print capitalism, vernacular language use) that exceeds either action or knowledge. When assimilated by a culture and taken for granted (i.e. accepted in a pre-reflective manner) such interconnected social and material developments are constitutive of a social imaginary.

If Anderson's account is correct, and it seems to me that it is, then for us to say that Gutiérrez's theology rightly participates in God's talk about God, we would not only need to say that he continues a precedent trajectory through the power of the Holy Spirit, but also that the imaginary within which his particular speech acts occurs renders those

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<sup>71</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition, (London: Verso, 2006).



acts socially significant in a similar manner to how Jesus' speech acts were significant two thousand years ago. Jesus did not speak of corporations or nation-states because these realities were not imagined in the same manner in first century Palestine. Gutiérrez quite obviously operates in an entirely different symbolic world. An account of reciprocal-recognition alone does not account for the impersonal and non-intersubjective factors contributing to Gutiérrez's theology, which would include the impact of print capitalism on the development of the notion of the nation-state that is central to Gutiérrez's account of liberation as the freeing of Latin American nation states from their dependency on their northern counterparts. The non-contrastive account of transcendence put forward in chapter 2 requires us to see the often-impersonal factors leading to a social imaginary as radically dependent upon God. The same chapter's account of common grace compels us to identify these factors as the immanent aspects of God's work of common grace if they contribute to Gutiérrez's properly speaking about God. Therefore, some effort must be made to further distinguish between the Holy Spirit's work in norms and an additional work of God the Father within the social imaginary that conditions Gutiérrez's God-talk as well as within the factors leading to such an imaginary.

If the social imaginary plays a role in conditioning God-talk, and if such talk is only valid if it is a participation in God's talk about God, then Hector's proposal must be expanded to account for the Father's role in conditioning the social imaginary. The point can be made in weak or in strong form. In weak form, we can say that there is nothing in human nature that would lead necessarily to a real encounter with God. Any doctrine of sin at least holds within it the possibility that we can move so far away from righteousness as to preclude any ability to find God. Therefore we must account for some

act of God in the social imaginary to prevent the complete hiddenness of God within that imaginary. This restraining of sin such that God is knowable is brought about through what Reformed theologians call common grace. In strong form, we might say that it is not possible to encounter God apart from grace. If we share Hector's commitment to Barthian conceptions of revelation (even though Barth himself would not equate a social imaginary with the activity of the Father) there is reason to affirm the stronger version. For Barth, revelation simply is God the Son incarnate.<sup>72</sup> Such a revelation is only possible given the fact that the Father is Revealer, and the resulting (in Hector's construal) norms that allow the believer to recognize this Revelation which is the historical life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the very Revealedness that is the Holy Spirit.<sup>73</sup> Hector's theology has a historical, non-contemporary place for Christ as Revelation and for the Spirit as the norms which constitute the Revealedness of the divine self-revelation. What is the Father's revealing act? Here Barth would not admit anything in nature that would function as a precondition for the self-revelation through the Word. However, as discussed in chapter 2, in this claim Barth arguably has too sharp of a divide between the doctrines of redemption and creation, at least in his early work.<sup>74</sup> Insofar as Barth asserts that revelation is a historical event, "a concrete relation to concrete men [sic],"<sup>75</sup> one

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<sup>72</sup> Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I.1, 134.

<sup>73</sup> As Timothy Bradshaw summarizes, the concept of "Revealedness" in Barth, though perhaps underdeveloped in I.1, indicates that that human knowledge of God is "wholly determined, bracketed by the reality of the Holy Spirit." Timothy Bradshaw, *Trinity and Ontology: A Comparative Study of the Theologies of Karl Barth and Wolfhart Pannenberg* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House Books, 1988), 19-20.

<sup>74</sup> I have discussed at length Barth's rejection of the *analogia entis* in chapter 2. For present purposes, one additional argument should be considered. Kevin Vanhoozer suggests against Barth that the revelation of the Word requires itself prior revelation to make the word intelligible. Vanhoozer seems to have in mind special revelation in the Old Testament, but the same case could be made for the necessity of a general revelation of the sort that I will describe in chapter 4. Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing*, 202-3.

<sup>75</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I.1, 373-374.

could argue in a semi-Barthian fashion (i.e. by taking account of the need for a unity of creation and redemption but otherwise retaining the major elements of Barth's system) and claim that it is precisely through that aspect of history whereby such concrete relations are rendered intelligible that the Father acted to prepare the revelation of the Son. In other words, the Father's work as Revealer required not only the sending of the Son, but the social-historical preparation for the Son's appearance through what I have called the social imaginary. Nor is this exclusively a divine activity in pre-Incarnational times; if the self-revelation of God in Christ is known today, it is known as a result of the continuing act of the Revealer to bring about a Revealedness of the divine Revelation, and this in a historical fashion to particular individuals situated in particular societies. In short, God is sovereignly immanent within all of creation,<sup>76</sup> and is therefore operative in whatever forces facilitate the social imaginaries that make theological concept use possible.<sup>77</sup>

The relationship between norms and the social imaginary provides the basis for distinguishing between the roles of the Father and the Spirit in the united divine work of transformation accomplished by common grace through aspects of society like the market. A first means of distinguishing between the work of the Spirit and the Father relies on the direction of influence between the world and human persons. It is important

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<sup>76</sup> This follows from Tanner's non-contrastive view of transcendence.

<sup>77</sup> This is not to say that every aspect of a social imaginary within which an encounter with God is possible must necessarily be ordered toward that end. On the contrary, subsequent discussion will show that certain aspects of a social imaginary can work against this very possibility, and in so doing undermine the internalized norms formed by the Spirit. However, this proposal is distinctive in emphasis from other recent theological applications of the social imaginary. For example, Smith highlights the need to develop a Christian social imaginary that is "a distinctly Christian understanding of the world that is implicit in the practices of Christian worship." While I am in favor of this form of analysis, my own concern is over the aspects of secular social imaginaries which still contain a sort of general revelation whereby humans are still shaped, at least in a minimal sense, so as to be able to encounter God. Smith, *Desiring*, 68.

to distinguish between, on the one hand, the pre-reflective thoughts and actions of an individual as a force operative on the world and thereby contributing both to the social imaginary and to the social, political, economic, cultural, and aesthetic structures that enable particular social imaginaries, and on the other hand, the social imaginary as also operative prior to intentional, reflective thought within an individual but arising from many factors that exceed the intersubjective influence of norms. In fact, this imaginary is partly responsible for shaping which actions are recognizable as carrying on in the trajectory in which the individual imagines herself taking part. Insofar as a social imaginary arises jointly from structures and ideas outside of the control of any particular individual or even any community, one could say that through a social imaginary the world is operative on the individual or community. More than this, insofar as the symbolic becomes reified in certain institutional facts that endure outside of the influence of a particular chain of reciprocal-recognition, a subject that will become clear in chapter 4, a social imaginary's influence on a subject must be distinguished from the patterns of recognition that respond to intersubjective influences with more fluidity. In other words, there is a sense in which the pre-reflective attunement of an individual as conditioned by and operative within norms can be operative *against* the prevailing social imaginary, thereby shaping the latter, and there is also a sense in which the social imaginary can be *against* those norm-related aspects of pre-reflective attunement of an individual such that the attunement is also perpetually shaped within and directed by that same social imaginary in ways that may be contrary to the forces operative within the process of reciprocal-recognition. If we are to posit that God is active through society, as our previous metaphysical considerations necessitate, I believe that the bidirectional nature of

this influence between norms and social imaginaries necessitates a distinction between the two directions in terms of divine agency.<sup>78</sup>

A second means of distinguishing the work of Father and Spirit without dividing the single divine work lies in the relationship between social imaginaries and social norms. Norms are not identical to the social imaginary insofar as they require the imaginary to be intelligible to a subject in the first place. Without a degree of overlap in the area of symbolic imagination, a subject cannot recognize acts in such a way as to receive them as normative. However, social imaginaries are also never extricable from the historical and social processes that they condition, insofar as these processes are always advancing the social-historical itself into new formulations, thereby modifying the imaginary.<sup>79</sup> This inextricable connection between imaginaries and historical and social processes like the unfolding of norms supports my decision to speak of appropriated aspects of the unified divine act. Nevertheless, the indivisible nature of norms and the imaginary does not preclude distinctive roles in the act of transformation for Father, Son,

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<sup>78</sup> Two further points necessitate this distinction. First, Hector's account of pneumatology is based in *interpersonal* recognition, but it is clear that the social imaginary is developed in large part through *impersonal* forces such as media, language, technology, custom, and so forth. Second, we can distinguish between social imaginary and intersubjective norms on linguistic grounds. Here Frege's distinction between force and tone is helpful. For Frege, force describes what a person does in speaking: be it giving a command, asserting a fact, or asking a question (etc.). Tone, on the other hand, refers to the significance that a particular command, assertion, or question may have in a given social context, such that the choice of certain words with the same sense, used for the same purpose (with the same force) may nevertheless signify something different to the hearer. This distinction suggests that one may *use* a concept in the same way as precedent uses, that is with the same force, and yet still signify something different with tone. Tone is often conditioned by external factors, of which I would consider those that lead to the social imaginary an important part, while use can largely be attributed to the norms internal to the process of interpersonal recognition. I would propose all other actions are subject to a similar distinction insofar as they bear the possibility of being interpreted. For a good summary of Frege, see Michael Dummett, *The Logical Basis of Metaphysics: The William James Lectures, 1976* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 113-122.

<sup>79</sup> "If the understanding makes the practice possible, it is also true that it is the practice that largely carries the understanding." Taylor, *Imaginaries*, 25.

and Spirit. As a social imaginary makes particular norm-based trajectories possible, we can appropriate God's work in an imaginary leading to proper God-talk to the Father, from whom issues all divine works. Similarly, because norms carry a possibility latent in an imaginary through to completion, they are properly understood as the immanent aspects of the Spirit's perfecting or completing of the undivided divine act. Neither of these two distinctions is fully elucidated in Hector's use of *Gefühl*.<sup>80</sup>

While this theological basis justifies the move toward appropriating any revelatory act through the social imaginary to the Father, a final step must be taken for us to recognize a social imaginary as the immanent term by which the Father brings about orthopathy. If any act is only intelligible as a result of a prior imaginary frame of reference (where such imagination is distinct from both the conscious application of purely noetic conceptual apparatus to an external reality and any act that arises within that imaginary), then any particular intelligibility (orthodoxy) or action (orthopraxis) has specific imaginaries as a sufficient condition for their respective realization. To return to the example of a nation-state, both conscious reflection on the governmental structures of a state and intentional actions within that state such as voting depend upon a prior and

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<sup>80</sup> I believe Hector could offer a sharper distinction between the world operative on an individual and the individual operative on the world. Here Hector would perhaps benefit from introducing a distinction of the sort that Schleiermacher offers between *Gefühl* ("feeling") and *Anschauung* ("perception"), where *Anschauung* is a perception of something external operative on the individual, while *Gefühl* is the unitive connection between the individual and the external reality. *Gefühl* carries *Anschauung* to completion by allowing a perception of grace to result in a life of faith, while *Gefühl* is dependent upon *Anschauung* to give aboutness to *Gefühl*, to provide an object to faith. See the helpful summary of the relation between these terms and their interconnectedness in Terrence Tice, *Schleiermacher* (Nashville, TN: Abdingdon, 2006), 22-29. Regarding the distinction between the preconditions to norms circulated, Hector notes that Schleiermacher "understands *Gefühl* as prior to knowing and doing, yet providing direction to each." (Hector, *Metaphysics*, 78). In this respect, *Gefühl* serves a similar role to the social imaginary as the source of action and knowledge. However, Hector also speaks of an "ongoing process of recognition" (Hector, *Metaphysics*, 85). Both aspects are attributed to the work of the Spirit, where it would be clearer to appropriate the originating aspect to the Father and the actual process of recognition to the perfecting role of the Spirit.

pre-reflective awareness of an imagined reality called “the state,” a reality whose existence depends upon both personal and impersonal forces that have shaped an imaginary. Therefore, such an imaginary is in part the efficient cause of any particular idea or act, but only in part. I say in part because we cannot exclude that human agency whereby one of the many possibilities intrinsic to a social imaginary is actualized. Yet insofar as this human agency is seen as concurrently divine agency, we must attribute both the human/personal and the impersonal factors contributing to a particular social imaginary to God. If we are to continue in the theology put forward in the patristic era where all divine acts originate with the Father, and we do well here to note Bonaventure’s appropriation of efficient cause to the Father,<sup>81</sup> then we can only attribute orthopathy and the social imaginary to the Father, and not to the Son or the Spirit insofar as an imaginary is the source from which any change originates. Interestingly, this is also in line with Jon Sobrino’s early deployment of the idea of orthopathy.<sup>82</sup>

It is important to recognize that linking the Father’s sovereign action to the social imaginary is not contrary to Hector’s position. Insofar as he acknowledges that *Gefühl* is derived from the internalization of custom, he recognizes God as active through custom.<sup>83</sup> And yet, recognizing the Father as sovereignly directing impersonal forces whose influence exceeds the limits of any norm-laden community while the Spirit operates through custom internalized as norms acquired through reciprocal-recognition allows a

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<sup>81</sup> Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions*, IV.2.

<sup>82</sup> Sobrino’s early writings on spirituality focused on genuine spirituality as honesty about the real, where dishonesty about the real entailed a state where “things are deprived of their proper meaning, their capacity to function as sacraments of transcendence, and their capacity to release history.” In other words, a genuine spirituality and orthopathy requires, at least in part, a proper understanding of what things are, how they relate, and in what fashion history can and should unfold. I have argued that such a sense simply is the social imaginary. Sobrino, *Spirituality*, 13-14.

<sup>83</sup> Hector, *Metaphysics*, 79.

more clearly Trinitarian explanation of human action. To put it simply, a social imaginary determines what trajectories are possible, while the process of recognition determines what possibilities continue a trajectory. God's work of transformation in a market would therefore potentially include a shift toward orthopathy through the development of a new social imaginary that made right action possible as well as a shift toward orthopraxis under the influence of intersubjectively established norms. Conversely, human efforts in the market that undermine common grace would distort a social imaginary and/or operate according to inappropriate norms.

### *Identity and the Work of the Son*

A social imaginary is not a monolithic reality. Just as there are distinctive subcultures within a given culture, so too there are distinctive yet overlapping social imaginaries within a society. Therefore, it is generally more appropriate to speak of social imaginaries in the plural, where the social imaginaries in a single society may coincide in significant ways while each imaginary may retain distinctive elements, or to speak of *a* social imaginary, rather than *the* social imaginary. The cross-pressure between socio-cultural forces outside of the norm-producing intersubjective networks that result in the social imaginary as the set of possible trajectories that a new action subject to norming can take and the process of recognition itself through which internalized norms carry forward precedent acts in one of the possible trajectories creates a continual conflict for an individual precisely because different social imaginaries may conflict with different norms. I find this situation of continual conflict and cross-pressure aptly summarized by what Edward Rommen calls "being-in-the-world," or the "individual's relationship to external frameworks of reality, in particular other human beings" as navigated "through



the ongoing history of one's interface with the physical as well as social and cultural dimensions of the world."<sup>84</sup> Rommen suggests that being, identity, and self-awareness are the three dimensions of human efforts to navigate being-in-the-world, and he further notes that a late modern individual suffers a loss of self due in large part to the radical reflexivity of the late modern thought that denies any ontological basis for identity or self-understanding. Rommen's call for a reprioritization of essence over existence and a return to the *imago dei* as a means of ontologically anchoring the self with respect to being focuses on being as a means of navigating being-in-the-world to the neglect of identity. Nevertheless, Rommen's suggestion that identity can serve as a basis for navigating being-in-the-world sets the course for the second amendment to Hector's theology.

The radical reflexivity that Rommen correctly identifies as operative in late modernity creates problems for maintaining continuity in the trajectory of precedent uses. Because an individual is ultimately unable to define herself reflexively, and because no ontic ground is admissible in the late modern context, she inevitably establishes identity rooted in a variety of social roles.<sup>85</sup> Since these roles vary, identity can be fragmented.<sup>86</sup> This is especially the case in the context of multiple social imaginaries. In his epic *A*

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<sup>84</sup> Edward Rommen, *Get Real* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2010), 57.

Rommen unfortunately does not offer any in-depth philosophical framework within which these intuitions can be developed, given that his concern is the more practical question of evangelism in the late modern world. As a result, I will have to develop the question of identity and "being-in-the-world" in directions that may be different from what Rommen had in mind.

<sup>85</sup> Here we see a connection between Rommen's discussion of radical reflexivity and Appadurai's claim that the imagination plays an unprecedented role in modernity. Because the late modern individual strives to self-establish identity, that individual must be more active in imagining various grounds through which identity can be established.

<sup>86</sup> Reflexive identity rooted in ethnicity can be fragmented as a result of external stimuli that make one particular identity more relevant in a given context than another. For an accessible explanation of this phenomenon, see Amin Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York City: Penguin, 2000).

*Secular Age*, Charles Taylor argues that our contemporary social imaginaries render the plausibility structures that lead to theistic belief subject to challenge.<sup>87</sup> In many cases, such plausibility structures are no longer even the default; unbelief is the norm. Taylor addresses numerous aspects of this situation, but two aspects directly relate to the issues raised by Rommen above. First, Taylor posits that we live in an “Age of Authenticity,” wherein each individual pursues a sort of expressivism that is embodied in a mutual display of self-expression and resulting social responses. This interplay of expression and social responses is often more fundamentally the basis of individuality than are aspects derived from spaces of collective action like the public square or market, but such expression is a mode of authenticity that challenges the role of all social norms.<sup>88</sup> This is but another way of saying that each individual is defined reflexively in relation to himself, Rommen’s radical reflexivity. Taylor sees this as a unique aspect of modern secular social imaginaries. Second, Taylor speaks of a “fragilization,” a weakening of any particular faith commitment rooted in the presence of a plurality of religious options coupled with the real possibility of a conversion to an alternative religious or irreligious option. Such fragilization in the face of cross-pressures leads to the possibility of reduced religious commitment.<sup>89</sup> This corresponds to the “religious and cultural” elements that

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<sup>87</sup> Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 2-4. Taylor distinguishes secularity<sub>3</sub> from secularity<sub>1</sub>, which is the process whereby religion left the public sphere, and secularity<sub>2</sub>, or the statistical decline in religious adherents. My analysis follows Taylor’s work on what he calls secularity<sub>3</sub>.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 473-504. For a helpful and brief discussion of the ethics of such an age of authenticity in Taylor’s work, see Ruth Abbey, “Theorizing Secularity 3: Authenticity, Ontology, Fragilization,” in *Aspiring to Fullness in a Secular Age: Essays on Religion and Theology in the Work of Charles Taylor*, eds. Carlos D. Colorado and Justin D. Klassen (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014), 102-104.

<sup>89</sup> Taylor, *Secular Age*, 303-304. Abbey suggests that Taylor ultimately treats fragilization as a less significant factor than the text ostensibly seems to imply, given that he admits not only that extreme positions do not necessarily feel the pressure of such fragilization, but also that large segments of more moderate religious practitioners may not experience

Rommen points us toward. Taken together, these factors are one way of illustrating that norms, of which religious commitments would be a particular subset, are often challenged as a result of certain ideals of authenticity and as a result of religious pluralism understood within a social imaginary that can picture conversion between religious groups, or even a move away from religion altogether. Such fragilization and radical reflexivity leads to a fragmentation that allows for numerous possible selves with possible commitments, possible norm-laden trajectories. These fragmented possible selves can essentially function as different perspectives subject to different internalized norms and operating with different “we-consciousnesses.”<sup>90</sup> Insofar as aspects of a social imaginary may allow for alternative possible selves with their own perspectives and norms contrary to those established by the Spirit in the pneumatology of recognition described by Hector, an inescapable possibility given the fallen nature of the world, the continuity of the trajectory is at risk in the event that these alternate perspectives become operative.

The problem can be put a different way: if individuals’ self-understanding can be fragmented by the competing pulls of a social imaginary and of recognition-based internalized norms, then one faces the very real problem that an internalized norm can very easily be abandoned in some fragments of the self. In other words, if Hector is

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anything similar to fragilization. Furthermore, while the terms imply a psychological focus, Taylor often analyzes the phenomena from a “God’s eye perspective” that focuses on social forces and not psychology, making the psychological nature of the chosen terms somewhat curious. Abbey, “Secularity 3,” 107-109. It remains unclear why granting exceptions to the fragilization thesis reduces its validity. Statistically speaking, the experience depicted may indeed be on the rise even with such exceptions, and arguably any particular individual may experience times in which religious beliefs appear fragile, and times in which they appear strong. Therefore, the idea of fragilization is still germane to the discussion at hand.

<sup>90</sup> On fragmentation as a result of our ability to adopt various perspectives from within various personages or identities, each with differing levels of involvement, see Richard S. Hallam, *Virtual Selves, Real Persons: A Dialogue Across Disciplines* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), chapter 4.

correct in his claim that conformity to Christ only counts as such if an individual can recreate “Christ-conforming performances *as one’s own*” and “*on one’s own*,”<sup>91</sup> we must ask how an individual once recognized as being able to do so would be able to maintain that ability through time. This is especially the case in situations where the original authority or community who recognized an individual as enacting Christ-conforming performances is no longer present to continue to judge. To be sure, I agree with Hector that recognition results in a norm that is internalized, but we must wonder how such a norm, once internalized, remains static enough to ensure the ongoing trajectory of precedent uses. What would stop the impersonal forces that contribute to a social imaginary and which are largely externally operative on a trajectory from derailing the norms internal to a particular chain of reciprocal-recognition?

Let us return again to the example of Gutiérrez to illustrate the role of identity in stabilizing a trajectory of concept use. Gutiérrez argues that salvation is necessarily historical so that it must touch human lives and human society through the process of liberation. God acts toward liberation, and so human beings should participate in such action. If Gutiérrez is incorrect, then we might suppose (as Daniel Bell seems to) that Gutiérrez is influenced by a social imaginary that only imagines political actions in terms of statecraft. Such an imaginary could preclude either right talk about the role of the Church in enacting liberating transformation, or right actions toward such liberation.<sup>92</sup> In this case, human beings might be “putting out the Spirit’s fire” as a result of a symbolic framework that made it impossible to envision God working through the Church toward transformation. Common grace would, by the permissive will of God, cease to operate in

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<sup>91</sup> Hector, *Metaphysics*, 87.

<sup>92</sup> See Bell, *Liberation Theology*.

the social imaginary Gutiérrez was shaped by such that his theology would no longer continue the trajectory established by Jesus as God's talk about God and such that his theology no longer facilitated communion with God as Father, Son, and Spirit operating through the Church for the transformation of the world.

On the other hand, perhaps Gutiérrez was not mistaken. Suppose that Gutiérrez was, at the time of his writing in 1971, rightly inspired by God and speaking prophetically in his context under the inspiration of the Spirit in a manner that carried on the trajectory established by the incarnate Son. Suppose that at that time Gutiérrez was recognized as carrying on (speech) acts in a manner similar to Christ, and that he was so molded through Spirit-empowered norms as to be able to recreate these acts as his own on his own. Many years have passed since the time Gutiérrez wrote his text. What would guarantee that Gutiérrez is still speaking in a fashion that carries on the trajectory established by Christ? Jung Mo Sung raises exactly this sort of criticism against certain forms of Latin American liberation theology that have failed to change with the times. The Latin American Church has moved from a contestatory context to an administrative context where Christians have an increasing degree of authority that they must use to manage scarcity.<sup>93</sup> Sung argues that there must be a corresponding shift in action and in the basic framework for understanding the world, a shift away from dependency theory and its primarily state-centered imaginary toward a focus on inclusion in markets through trade with a corresponding imaginary centered on non-state actors. If Sung is correct, then Gutiérrez would no longer be engaged in orthopraxic liberation arising from an orthopathic understanding of the world. In the likely absence of the community that first

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<sup>93</sup> Sung, *Desire*, 106.

taught Gutiérrez to recreate Christ's work as his own and on his own,<sup>94</sup> and facing the likelihood that the state-oriented imaginary that is apparently influential on Gutiérrez may no longer allow for proper continuation of a trajectory continuing Jesus' solidarity with the poor, some third factor must make it possible for Gutiérrez to return to the original accuracy of his position that we assumed for this thought exercise.

This is where identity comes into play, and here I think I am not deviating far from Hector's intention. Near the end of *Theology Without Metaphysics*, Hector suggests that the practice of taking-true requires involvement on the part of the believer in terms of "identification and transformation," which Hector links with justification and sanctification respectively.<sup>95</sup> (This connection between justification and sanctification will become increasingly important in subsequent chapters). Hector suggests that identification is commitment to a belief that transforms other beliefs by causing the believer to abandon or modify these beliefs.<sup>96</sup> I propose to extend Hector's link between identification and justification a step farther. If we are to follow Martin Luther, for example, we can say that, in justification, an "alien righteousness" makes "everything which Christ has" ours,<sup>97</sup> such that we can say, "Mine are Christ's living, doing, and speaking, his suffering and dying."<sup>98</sup> This is but another way of saying with Paul, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Our identification is a commitment not just to a belief, but to the person of the Son to whose image we are

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<sup>94</sup> This is, of course, not to suggest that the Church is no longer present, nor that Gutiérrez is no longer a part of the body. It is simply to note that the actual historical community with which Gutiérrez interacted and which normed his actions and language in 1971 is not identical with the actual historical community norming Gutiérrez today.

<sup>95</sup> Hector, *Metaphysics*, 235-6.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 236-7.

<sup>97</sup> Martin Luther, "Two Kinds of Righteousness," in *Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger (New York: Anchor Books, 1962), 87.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

conformed. In Christ, we receive a new identity as a gift of God, and it is as a result of this identity that we can act in the Spirit towards our sanctification. To put things in Hector's terminology, if the Spirit is active in recognition to develop norms then Christ is active as the one each believer encounters on a continued basis spiritually, through the Scriptures, and through faithful preaching as bestowing an identity that allows for a degree of self-norming. Through our identity in Christ, we ensure the continuity of identity that allows our internalized norms to carry forward the precedent trajectory even in situations where the process of recognition is no longer active.

Identity serves as a basis for regulating the cross-pressures between often-secular social imaginaries and the Spirit-enabled intersubjective norms of the religious community in several ways. First, in the context of fragmentation and numerous possible selves, that part of identity which is challenged is often the one clung to most tenaciously.<sup>99</sup> Therefore, when there are social-historical pressures that coerce a trajectory to shift in such a way that it no longer picks out God, an identity that is integrally tied up with the maintenance of this trajectory would resist this cross-pressure. The preservation of the trajectory would be secured. Second, human thinking is largely narrativel. Identity plays a key role in the narrative by allowing for re-identification of the self in the narrative plot. This re-identification pushes an individual toward perpetuating particular roles that were assumed (or imagined to be assumed) in the past parts of the narrative. Without identity and without such re-identification, such continuity is much less easily preserved.

With this understanding of identity in mind, I must again turn to the question of why I will appropriate identity to the Son, and why such an attribution is appropriation

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<sup>99</sup> Maalouf, *Identity*.

and nothing more. The attribution of identity to the Son is particularly clear insofar as the doctrine of justification includes within it the imputation of a new status or identity.<sup>100</sup> While it is “God (the Father) who justifies” (Rom. 8:31),<sup>101</sup> that justification leads to believers’ “adoption as sons” (8:23) and conformity to the image of the Son (8:29). The actual identity received is the same identity that Christ possesses: sonship and image-bearer. Beyond the Scriptural basis for such an attribution, the pattern also fits with the basic model of appropriation I have presented above. Formal cause is appropriated to the Son in Bonaventure’s triad, and identity is arguably that which gives arrangement or shape to the cross-pressures of the social imaginary and particular norms. Or, to return to the formula offered by Nyssa, identity is what actualizes and sustains a particular set of norms and a potential self-understanding within a particular imaginary. Within a specific identity, a person regulates their course along a trajectory, maintains a specific relation to other social forces, and retains a specific orientation amid a symbolic network of possible worlds. Thus, identity more than other factors accounts for why a particular person is the sort of person that they are, given multiple possible trajectories and even various possible social imaginaries. Identity gives form to the particular, and insofar as this form is in conformity to Christ, it serves as an immanent term to the action of God within the social-historical world. Given that theology explores, to quote Calvin, “the knowledge of

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<sup>100</sup> I recognize that justification is the topic of extensive debate in recent New Testament studies, but I will address the topic at greater length in chapter 5. For now, it is sufficient to say that I am convinced a case can be made for the fact that justification bestows such identity, regardless of whether one accepts the “new perspective” on Paul or the “old.”

<sup>101</sup> Following the logic of appropriations laid out in chapter 2, we can say that the Father justifies because he is the source of the new identity in Christ.



God and of ourselves,”<sup>102</sup> we can also say that identity is the immanent term for God’s transformative work on a Christian in the dimension of orthodoxy.

The concept of identity rounds out the proposed modifications to Hector’s pneumatology. Norms that reinforce particular practices (whether linguistic or otherwise) continue a trajectory established by Christ – and here we ought to note that even Christ’s paradigmatic work continued in certain respects trajectories traceable to the prophets, priests, and kings whose roles he more perfectly fulfilled – a trajectory empowered by the Holy Spirit. Such a trajectory is made possible through the illuminating work of the Father and maintained through identity of sonship brought about by conformity to the Son. Norms, identity, and the social imaginary are all aspects of the created order, and as such must be seen as radically dependent upon God. The acts and events that bring about such norms, particular identities, and various social imaginaries are acts and events coincident with the providential work of God.

Assuming the connections I have outlined above do exist, on what grounds do I limit these connections to mere appropriation? The restriction of the identification of the divine work through social imaginaries, particular identities, and social norms by which an individual or set of individuals can be brought into communion with God to an appropriation with the Father, Son, and Spirit respectively follows just as strongly from the interconnected nature of the social imaginary, identity, and social norms as it does from any a priori commitment to the indivisibility of the divine actions *ad extra*.<sup>103</sup> For

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<sup>102</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, I.1.1.

<sup>103</sup> Consider, for example, how Johann Arnason summarizes Castoriadis’ theory of social imaginary significations: “The imaginary element in the social-historical complex is to be distinguished from the components based on perception (in the broad sense of more or less explicit awareness of the given) or rationality (defined in terms of basic rules applying to coherent thought or behavior). But the next step is to recognize permanent interaction with these

example I have attempted to suggest that language use is but one subset of acts that are learned and regulated through reciprocal-recognition, and I have accepted Hector's proposal that such norms contain within them pre-reflective elements that may be attributed to the Holy Spirit. However, insofar as these elements are pre-reflective, do they not impinge upon the domain of the social imaginary? There is admittedly an overlap here, though the specific pre-reflective elements in hand can be incompletely distinguished from the social imaginary. This is true, first, because particular sects in which social norms are especially strong may act against a dominant social imaginary, and may do so in a way that leads to psychological conflict within various adherents of the sect in question. This example of what I have called the cross-pressure between social imaginary and social norms suggests at least a partial distinction between the two, even granting that a full distinction is not possible given that particular (norm-regulated) acts contain within themselves symbolic elements that contribute to the development of a particular social imaginary. A lack of a full distinction requires appropriation: the influence of social imaginary, identity, and norms in transformation can be distinguished, but one is never operative fully independent of the other. Given that God is at work as Father, Son, and Spirit through history to bring about the possibility of divine-human

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two aspects (or, to put it another way, with experiential data and rationalizing efforts) as the *modus operandi* of the imaginary source, and therefore also of the significations which it brings into being. And the picture becomes even more complicated when we add that the interaction is not a matter of contacts between clearly demarcated domains: rather, the three factors interpenetrate in complex and often ambiguous ways. Imaginary significations shape patterns of perception as well as frameworks and horizons of rationalization... Conversely, inputs from perceptual experience enter into the making of imaginary significations, and the imagination cannot articulate its themes without an admixture of rationalization." Johann Arnason, "Social Imaginary Significations," in *Cornelius Castoriadis: Key Concepts*, ed. Suzi Adams (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 33-34. While I do not develop the same threefold distinction that Arnason describes in Castoriadis, particularly abandoning the distinction between perception and imaginary significations (I classify the latter as a subset of the former), the inextricable relationship between the terms considered by Castoriadis still remains in my own analysis.

communion, this is but another way of saying that the Father, Son, and Spirit do not act in isolation from the other persons, even though the divine acts can be distinguished through appropriation. Therefore, the immanent terms of the divine redemptive act considered here neither give exhaustive understanding of divine agency, nor exhaustive understanding of human consciousness, human history, or human society. Divine acts will always, of course, include those special interventions that include the special grace offered to the Church, which will always exceed those elements of common grace available to all of humanity. Yet these acts lie outside of the scope of economic theory. While they remain of vital importance to the Church, they are somewhat less helpful to any theology of economics.

### **From a Theory of Providence to the Identification of Providential Acts**

With the above modifications to Hector's proposal, I have now identified three created realities which can conform to the divine work of redemption in common grace or which can impede the efficacy of that common grace in the market. Each of these realities – the social imaginary, identity, and norms – constitute the immanent terms that may be coincident with concurrent divine action and which can be appropriated to the Father, Son, and Spirit respectively. Of course, it would be equally possible to speak of these terms as aspects of human consciousness and subjectivity. This recognition would require us to speak of God superveniently acting through three distinctive mental acts in human minds by which human beings are guided in experience, knowledge, and action by social imaginaries, identity, and norms respectively. While this psychological dimension of the immanent terms should remain in the background of the reader's mind throughout the duration of the work, I have chosen instead to speak of norms, identity,

and social imaginaries as quasi-autonomous realities through which God works because these realities can each, at times, take on a form of agency for themselves by which they operate on human subjects. A more important reason lies behind this choice: speaking of the immanent terms of imaginaries, identity, and norms results in a form that is relevant to recent analysis of economic models more easily than would speaking of three aspects of human consciousness.

This chapter concludes the theoretical foundation for this project, and the next will begin my concrete analysis of the market, with a special emphasis on the role of economic models in constructing the market in a manner that either impedes communion with God by drawing human action further away from concurrent divine action, or facilitates it by allowing for full coincident action between God and human beings. The following chapters will explore the sorts of transformation occurring within the market that chapter 1 uncovered in the survey of existing approaches to theology and economics, evaluating the claims of these approaches in terms of the three dimensions of such transformation: orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy. The second half of this work is not merely an evaluation and application of existing findings. I will also contribute my own analysis, while reinterpreting the work of the existing approaches using the language of norms, identity, and social imaginaries that make up the immanent terms for this Triune divine action. All of this will allow me to center the discussion on the notion of trinitarian action within the market and on human resistance to this action.

## CHAPTER 4 – IMAGINARIES, MARKETS, AND THE FATHER WHO REVEALS

The economy is not a natural fact, a phenomenon that we find; rather it is a reality that we make, and how we conceptualize the economy will greatly shape how we make it.

- Charles M.A. Clark<sup>1</sup>

In 1998, two economists conducted a study in ten day-care centers in Israel to determine the effectiveness of the practice of fining parents who were late in picking up their children. After spending a month establishing a baseline measure of how many parents were late to pick up their child, six of ten day-care centers studied implemented a small fine for parents who were more than ten minutes late. The remaining four centers instituted no fines and served as a control group. In the month following the institution of the fine, occurrences of late child pickups at centers with the new fines steadily increased before settling at a new level roughly twice as high as the level prior to instituting the fine and relative to the control group, in which instances of late pickups remained unchanged. What is particularly fascinating about the study is that the six day-care centers that implemented a fine removed it after twelve weeks with no noticeable reduction in late parents. It seems that the behavior of the parents was permanently changed.

When planning the study, Uri Gneezy and Aldo Rustichini assumed the standard economic position that implementing the fine would deter late pickups due to increased costs for arriving late. When their predictions failed, they had to develop a new explanation for the results, namely, that “the introduction of the fine changes the perception of people regarding the environment in which they operate.”<sup>2</sup> The authors

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<sup>1</sup> Charles M.A. Clark, foreword to Luigino Bruni, *The Wound and the Blessing: Economics, Relationships, and Happiness*, trans. N. Michael Brennen (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2012), xi.

<sup>2</sup> Uri Gneezy and Aldo Rustichini, “A Fine is a Price,” *Journal of Legal Studies* 29.1 (Jan 2000), 3.

assume an implicit contract between parents and the day-care center prior to the announcement of specific fines such that parents fear the imposition of a significant fine or perhaps more significant consequences, such as the elimination of the child from the day-care system. Once a fine is introduced, the expected (or feared) cost for parents decreased, causing the cost of late pickups to be less than the benefits. On this theory, late parents operate according to the standard models of rationality in economic theory, which Gneezy and Rustichini are able to map using game theory and a model describing equilibrium within this game.<sup>3</sup> While they consider the standard equilibrium model tenable, the authors do note that “a completely different interpretation” is also possible, one based on social factors. Prior to implementing the fine, parents perceived any teacher who remained late with children after regular hours as a “nice and generous person” who should not be taken advantage of by parents who were late. After implementing the fine, parents understood teachers who remained late due to parental tardiness to be operating within the same market structure where childcare can be bought at the given price as much as desired. In other words, using the terminology developed in chapter 3, implementation of a fine results in a shift in social imaginary from an imaginary centered on moral duty to an imaginary focusing on exchange by price mechanism, what we could call a market social imaginary. After this shift, the market social imaginary remains dominant, even after the elimination of a fine. As the authors note, “Once a commodity, always a commodity.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 11-13.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 14.

### **Economics as Poesis: Designing Markets**

Gneezy and Rustichini's experiment with day cares is one of numerous examples where economists constructed a market. So far, I have used the term "market" ambiguously. Let me now be more precise in its definition. A market is an enduring, constructed, and imagined space within which an exchange of goods and services at agreed upon prices occurs. A market is enduring because it allows for repeated transactions between various parties who exchange goods or services for a price, usually stated in terms of some currency. While a market typically requires a basis in tangible, physical reality (i.e. tents and tables at a farmer's market, or computer screens, a "pit," and telephone and internet lines for a financial market), a market is fundamentally an imagined reality. In the transition from a moral social imaginary, where parental duty required parents to make their best effort to pick up their children on time, to a market social imaginary, where late pickup was acceptable pending an exchange of a set price, there was no significant change in physical reality.<sup>5</sup> What changed was the way that each parent imagined his or her relationship with the day-care center, and how he or she acted accordingly. I will return to this point in due course. Finally, a market is constructed. Markets do not naturally exist, and economists, business owners, and politicians often expend significant effort to develop a new market. In the instance above, Gneezy and Rustichini merely had to institute a new policy at several day-care centers to construct a market. Other constructed markets require much more effort.

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<sup>5</sup> Each day care posted a sign announcing the new policy on an already existing bulletin board. Fines were assessed through the normal billing procedure for day care tuition. Thus, no significant new physical changes were needed to institute a market.

Consider, for example, the emerging branch of economics known as “market design.” Market design “does not take markets as given,” but rather

combines insights from economic and game theory together with common sense and lessons learned from empirical work and experimental analysis to aid in the design and implementation of actual markets.<sup>6</sup>

Economists have become increasingly involved in market design, implementing new markets in previously unimaginable parts of society. So, for example, economist Alvin Roth played a central role in designing the New England Program for Kidney Exchange, a market designed to facilitate the exchange of kidneys between potential donors and recipients. The market arose because many family members are willing to donate kidneys to a sick family member who needs a transplant, but often such family members are not a match and are therefore unable to donate their kidney. Economists therefore built a market that could match pairs of patients and their willing family donors such that the donor from one family could provide a kidney to the patient in another, and visa versa.<sup>7</sup> The matching mechanism for such donations drew on several existing algorithms and a model for equilibrium in a certain type of game in the housing market to construct a donor matching system and to facilitate the exchange of kidneys on a market in New England.<sup>8</sup> The kidney exchange is one example of economists intentionally designing a market based on an existing economic model toward the resolution of a specific problem.

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<sup>6</sup> Nir Vulkan, Alvin E. Roth, and Zvika Neeman, “Introduction,” in *The Handbook of Market Design*, eds. Nir Vulkan, Alvin E. Roth, and Zvika Neeman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Alvin E. Roth, “The Art of Designing Markets,” *Harvard Business Review*, 85.10 (Oct. 2007): 118-126.

<sup>8</sup> Tayfun Sönmez and M. Utku Ünver, “Market Design for Kidney Exchange,” in *The Handbook of Market Design*, eds. Nir Vulkan, Alvin E. Roth, and Zvika Neeman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 93-94.



There are numerous other examples of designed markets in economic literature. Economist Julian Simon convinced the (now defunct) Civil Aeronautics Board in the United States to remove random bumping of passengers from overbooked flights and to institute an auction-based market for vouchers for future airline seats, thereby creating a market to resolve overbooked airline flights.<sup>9</sup> Economists were also behind the development of the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) that helps match medical students with hospital residency programs.<sup>10</sup> Economic arguments were decisive in eliminating a military draft in the United States and instituting a voluntary military force. Economists argued that opportunity costs for a voluntary military force are always less than those for a conscripted force. Volunteers only enlist when it is their best option to maximize earnings and/or utility.<sup>11</sup> A market for the armed services was constructed largely as a result of such arguments. Economists have designed auctions to help Ocean Spray sell cranberry concentrate,<sup>12</sup> strawberry markets in France,<sup>13</sup> the algorithms that lie behind job matching programs offered through LinkedIn and AfterCollege, Inc.,<sup>14</sup> and markets for tradable fishing permits.<sup>15</sup> In each instance, we see an economic model or a principle derived from a model deployed for the purpose of constructing a market.

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<sup>9</sup> Robert E. Litan, *Trillion Dollar Economists: How Economists and Their Ideas Have Transformed Business*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Alvin Roth, "Designing Markets."

<sup>11</sup> Beth J. Asch, James C. Miller III, and John T. Warner, "Economics and the All-Volunteer Military Force," in *Better Living Through Economics*, ed. John J. Siegfried (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 254-7.

<sup>12</sup> Litan, *Trillion Dollar Economists*, 65.

<sup>13</sup> Michel Callon, *The Laws of Markets* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), 22.

<sup>14</sup> Litan, *Trillion Dollar Economists*, 147.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example Suzi Kerr, James Sanchirico, and Richard Newell, "Fishing Quota Markets," *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, 49.3 (May 2005): 437-462.

Admittedly, each of the examples considered so far pertains to the construction of smaller markets, a fact that could lead to the mistaken conclusion that only such smaller markets are designed, while *the* Market as a whole, by which I mean the imagined, global, enduring and constructed space within which all economic exchanges occur, is in fact natural and not constructed. One who reached this conclusion would be greatly mistaken. In fact, as long as markets have existed they have been constructed, and *the* Market is simply the aggregate of these smaller constructions. From the days of Adam Smith (and even earlier!), politicians created markets. For example, in the Methuen treaty of 1703, the British convinced the Portuguese to accept textiles shipments in return for permission to export port wine to England at a tariff level no higher than that set for French wines. This agreement immediately resulted in a new market emerging for international trade, but it also helped to increase British bullion holdings (Portuguese demand for imported textiles was much higher than British demand for imported wine).<sup>16</sup> Here one could object that this is not an example of market construction, but of “deregulation.” In point of fact, however, this is more fittingly an example of market design. As Marc Landy and Martin Levin point out, “Market design initiatives, successful or not, embody rules and regulations that are often at least as numerous and complicated as those they displace.” It is therefore more proper to speak of regulation shifting from anti- to pro-competition regulations.<sup>17</sup> Such macroeconomic market design occurred in greater scale after the recent fall of the communist bloc. Countries of the former Soviet bloc like Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania have markets that were

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<sup>16</sup> Schlefer, *Assumptions*, 34-5.

<sup>17</sup> Marc K. Landy and Martin A. Levin, “Creating Competitive Markets: The Politics of Market Design,” in *Creating Competitive Markets: The Politics of Regulatory Reform*, ed. Mark K. Landy, Martin A. Levin, and Martin Shapiro (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), 5.

constructed in part by historical circumstance and in part under the guidance of Western think tanks, consultancies, and academic researchers.<sup>18</sup> The complex political process of privatization unfolded within emerging political institutions and a number of national and international interests.<sup>19</sup> In these and other instances, even global markets must be considered a construction, the byproduct of intentional human agency.<sup>20</sup>

Not all markets are intentionally constructed. Often, economic actions take on a particular, enduring pattern through the unintentional consequences of economic modeling. Donald Mackenzie has developed what is perhaps the most thorough case study of the performativity thesis, a thesis which strongly supports the notion of unintentional construction of specific market forms through the application of economic models. Mackenzie's definition of performativity deserves comment before we discuss his example. He develops several degrees of performativity, the highest of which he calls

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<sup>18</sup> Roderick Martin, *Constructing Capitalisms: Transforming Business Systems in Central and Eastern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 272-3. Jeffrey Sachs offers a helpful personal account of his involvement in the transition to capitalism in Poland, where he advocated the construction of a market through five pillars of policy proposals as advisor to the Polish solidarity movement: stabilization, liberalization, privatization, a social safety net, and institutional harmonization. Jeffrey D. Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 109-115.

<sup>19</sup> Martin, *Constructing Capitalisms*, 79-84.

<sup>20</sup> We must here resist what could be called the myth of the natural market, which assumes that "a market comes into being whenever acting persons engage in exchanges... other things being equal, markets arise naturally and spontaneously." This particular quote embodying the myth of the natural market is taken from Santelli, *Free Person*, 69, but similar claims can be found throughout economic and theological literature. John Bolt, for example, treats the market as organically and spontaneously arising from a family as descendants develop their own industry and initiate trade. This may well have been the case for some markets in antiquity, but today's markets are enmeshed with far too complicated legal, institutional, and economic systems to pretend that they are not at least partially constructed and designed. Claiming that markets are constructed does not require, as Bolt suggests it would, that we can fully understand how such construction occurred, nor that some central planner designed every aspect of a market, nor even that we must yield to a worldview centered on "ideology, alienation, and liberation." Construction does mean, however, that we cannot divorce those aspects of the market that are natural from the regulations and institutions that attempt to direct a natural phenomenon and which have developed this phenomenon far beyond what would be possible from mere organic developments alone. John Bolt, *Economic Shalom: A Reformed Primer on Faith, Work, and Human Flourishing* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian's Library Press, 2013), 46-50.

“Barnesian performativity,” which is when “economic processes or their outcomes are altered so that they better correspond to the model.”<sup>21</sup> The model is the decisive financial technology in Mackenzie’s analysis:

While beliefs about markets are clearly important, an aspect of economics that is incorporated only into beliefs ‘in the heads’ of economic actors may have a precarious status. A form of incorporation that is in some sense deeper is incorporation into algorithms, procedures, routines, and material devices. An economic model that is incorporated into these can have effects even if those who use them are skeptical of the model’s virtues, unaware of its details, or even ignorant of its very existence.<sup>22</sup>

In his study of the development of finance theory from the 1960s until the late 1990s, Mackenzie uncovered one very convincing example<sup>23</sup> of Barnesian performativity: options theory. Options are “contracts that give the purchaser the option, or *right*, to buy or sell the underlying financial instrument at a specified price... within a specified period of time.”<sup>24</sup> Before the 1970s, options were hardly traded in the United States, but by December 2005, there were outstanding derivatives contracts (options are a form of derivative) worldwide equal to \$46,000 per person on earth.<sup>25</sup> Before 1970, Fischer Black and Myron Scholes developed a model (eventually called the Black-Scholes-Merton model, the BSM) to explain what the equilibrium price of a stock option would be. Initial testing by Black and Scholes against an “ad hoc New York options market” actually

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<sup>21</sup> Donald Mackenzie, *An Engine, Not a Camera: How Financial Models Shape Markets*. (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2006), 19. Mackenzie names this variety of performativity as a tribute to: Barry Barnes, *The Nature of Power* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

<sup>22</sup> Mackenzie, *Engine*, 19.

<sup>23</sup> Mackenzie also uncovered several likely examples of performativity and counterperformativity which were less conclusive: the Capital Asset Pricing Model and index funds, the “turn-of-the-year” and “small-firm” effects, exploitation of financial “anomalies”, and portfolio “insurance.”

<sup>24</sup> Frederic S. Mishkin and Stanley G. Eakins, *Financial Markets and Institutions* (Boston: Addison-Wesley, 2006), 655.

<sup>25</sup> Donald Mackenzie, “Is Economics Performative? Option Theory and the Construction of Derivatives Markets,” *Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, 28.1 (March 2006): 29.

“found only an approximate fit.”<sup>26</sup> In 1972 currency futures began to be traded at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME), and shortly thereafter stock options began to be traded by the Chicago Board Options Exchange (CBOE).<sup>27</sup> When these markets opened, options were initially 30-40% overvalued relative to the model.<sup>28</sup> Despite this discrepancy, and through a variety of factors, the model began to be widely used throughout the CBOE and CME. Simplifying to a degree, whenever options prices differed from the “correct” price according to the model, arbitragers bought and sold options to make a profit until the price converged on the model. By June-August 1983, options’ prices only departed from the BSM by an average of 0.32%.<sup>29</sup> Many interviewed traders held the belief that “Black-Scholes was really what enabled the exchange to thrive.”<sup>30</sup> However, in 1987 a financial crash led to a loss of faith in the BSM model, which is now permanently a poor fit as a result of what is known as the “volatility skew.”<sup>31</sup> The BSM would no longer fulfill its performative function of coordinating agents within a market to act in a particular manner.

This history demonstrates the pattern of Barnesian performativity through the application of a model: initially the model does not accurately describe reality, but through its application the model causes reality to become more like the model itself. It also suggests that models can be deployed to the result of constructing markets that perform in a particular manner in accordance with predicted actions. While many models

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<sup>26</sup> Mackenzie, *Engine*, 124.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 148-158.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>30</sup> Donald Mackenzie and Yuval Millo, “Constructing a Market, Performing Theory: The Historical Sociology of a Financial Derivatives Exchange,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 109.1 (July 2003): 121.

<sup>31</sup> Mackenzie, *Engine*, 202.

will not obviously function in a performative manner at the level of Barnesian performativity, there is reason to believe that all models have some degree of influence in shaping a social imaginary that results in actions more in line with those predicted by most economic models in general. This brings us to the question of the function of economic models.

Intuitively, it would seem that a model is designed to describe reality in a manner that allows for accurate economic predictions. In reality, most economic models cannot be easily tested. Macroeconomic models cannot hold all variables but one constant to determine outcomes in a controlled environment, and historical circumstances will always differ between analyzed times and places.<sup>32</sup> Those models that are tested against economic data generally have not yielded significant predictive success. At most, we might agree with Alexander Rosenberg that models tend to offer “generic predictions,” which is to say “predictions of the existence of a phenomenon, process or entity, as opposed to specific predictions about its detailed character.”<sup>33</sup> This is true even in the most significant and broad claims of neoclassical theory, such as the principle that increases in price result in decreases in demand. In chapter 1 I argued that this principle is not purely positive insofar as it contains within it certain normative judgments about how

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<sup>32</sup> Schlefer, *Assumptions*, 275.

<sup>33</sup> Alexander Rosenberg, *Economics – Mathematical Politics or Science of Diminishing Returns?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 69. See also his summary of predictive success in economics as of 1992. *Ibid.*, pp. 56-86. Lawrence Klein notes that shortly after World War II, institutions like the National Bureau of Economic Research focused on “forecasting *direction* of movement, not its quantitative magnitude,” an objective akin to “general prediction” as described by Rosenberg. After a half century of progress, Klein is more optimistic about the successes of forecasting compared to what statisticians anticipated, but he grants that the “user community wants much more accurate forecasts.” He anticipates only accuracy improvement “of a few percentage points,” and that only with “enormous effort.” Lawrence R. Klein, “An Essay on the Accuracy of Economic Prediction,” *International Journal of Applied Economics & Econometrics*, 9.1 (Jan – March, 2001): 31, 62. Despite differences in tone, both authors grant that the sort of economic predictions that many policy makers and economists would seek are not currently obtainable through standard econometric tools.

economic agents should act. As it turns out, even a principle as central to economic theory as supply and demand can be questioned on purportedly positive grounds: data analysis often challenges the assumption that demand and price are correlated. For example, Houthakker and Taylor analyzed eighty-three categories of consumer expenditures from 1929-1963 to derive demand equations to explain fluctuations. Only forty-five of eighty-three best-fit equations even appealed to price changes to explain behavior, and price “only border[ed] on significant in many of these.”<sup>34</sup> In other words, in most of these categories, price changes seemed to have no impact on demand, which was apparently determined by other factors.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, the law of supply, namely that decreases in price result in decreases in supply of a good or service, is often equally open to challenges from empirical data. For example, studies in labor economics have repeatedly shown that real labor supply curves do not actually fit standard economic theory in terms of the law of supply.<sup>36</sup> Though one of the strongest conclusions of modern economic theory, even the laws of supply and demand may not be as strong as they seem.

For half a century, a number of highly debated laboratory experiments have also questioned the extent of the validity of standard demand theory. Early experimental economic tests by Edward Chamberlain found classroom markets did not converge on

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<sup>34</sup> H.S. Houthakker and Lester D. Taylor, *Consumer Demand in the United States, 1929-1970: Analyses and Projections* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 153-4.

<sup>35</sup> Houthakker and Taylor suggest that “habit formation” is the main basis for determining demand in many categories. A commodity once consumed is likely to always be consumed as a fixed ratio of total private consumption expenditures, which the authors suggest should become the main basis for predicting demand. *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Robert E. Prasch, *How Markets Work: Supply, Demand and the ‘Real World’* (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2008), 83, 85. Prasch offers a helpful summary of studies in United States labor markets and developing labor markets that show supply curves that fail to meet the standard model.

equilibrium.<sup>37</sup> When Vernon Smith later ran classroom experiments on the law of supply and demand, he found the opposite results of Chamberlain. Smith was able to trade imaginary goods in a classroom to reach the equilibrium point predicted by economic models. Significantly, he concluded that the double oral auction mechanism he established in his classroom market experiments was able to reach partial equilibrium (where demand meets supply) more easily than equilibrium was met in other market constructions.<sup>38</sup> In other words, the law of demand needed a certain market construction to have a high probability of obtaining. It is no surprise, therefore, that alternative experiments with alternative parameters have been able to challenge the law of demand. The most interesting challenge is found in the concept of anchoring. Dan Ariely describes this strange psychological phenomenon well. “Initial prices are largely ‘arbitrary’” and are often anchored to numbers unrelated to preference or utility (in one experiment initial valuations of goods are even swayed by having subjects recall the last two digits of their social security numbers!). However, “once those prices are established in our minds, they shape not only what we are willing to pay for an item, but also how much we are willing to pay for related products.”<sup>39</sup> Ariely and colleagues were able to use the phenomenon of anchoring to manipulate subjects’ willingness to pay for a good, suggesting that, contrary to mainstream theory, demand may not always (or even often) be a reflection of rational preferences responding to price fluctuations.<sup>40</sup> In any event, recent mathematical challenges to equilibrium theory suggest that major proofs for general equilibrium

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<sup>37</sup> Edward Chamberlain, “An Experimental Imperfect Market,” *The Journal of Political Economy* 56.2 (April 1948): 95-108.

<sup>38</sup> For an accessible summary, see Ross M. Miller, *Paving Wall Street: Experimental Economics & The Quest for the Perfect Market* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002), 42-58.

<sup>39</sup> Ariely, *Predictably Irrational*, 30.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-48.



(simultaneous equilibrium in the markets for all goods), which claim to rely on the laws of supply and demand, in fact either depend on different variables or contradict such laws. Even if the law of demand stands up to empirical enquiry, the complex models used to design markets that clear or to create policies that seek a certain macroeconomic equilibrium would therefore at times be shown to contradict empirical evidence.<sup>41</sup>

Why are basic economic models such as demand curves that only offer generic predictions and that rely upon a questionable empirical basis still standard content in both introductory economics textbooks and in countless complex academic papers on economics? Perhaps it is because, as Katarina Juselius argues, most economists follow a “theory-first” approach, where models are treated as “the best way to describe and understand our complex empirical reality.”<sup>42</sup> In this approach, a researcher begins with a model and then uses empirical data to slightly modify the model and to allow for increasing degrees of statistical variance without attending to the circumstances surrounding the data collected. This is certainly how supply and demand curves developed. Initially they provided a basic idea for expected trends, but specific values were only added later.<sup>43</sup> Juselius argues that such an approach leads to a “low ability” to

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<sup>41</sup> Carlo Benetti, Alejandro Nadal, and Carlos Salas, “The Law of Supply and Demand in the Proof of Existence of General Competitive Equilibrium,” in *The Flawed Foundations of General Equilibrium: Critical Essays on Economic Theory*, eds. Frank Ackerman et al. (New York: Routledge, 2004). Benetti, Nadal, and Salas consider proofs offered by Nikaido, Arrow and Hahn, Debreu, and Arros and Debreu. For example, in Nikaido’s proof for equilibrium, price variations depend upon the presence of excess demand elsewhere, not on the price variations themselves. *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>42</sup> Katarina Juselius, “On the Role of Theory and Evidence in Macroeconomics,” in *The Elgar Companion to Recent Economic Methodology*, ed. John B. Davis and D. Wade Hands (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2011), 405. cf. Tomas Sedlacek, *Economics of Good and Evil: The Quest for Economic Meaning from Gilgamesh to Wall Street* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 290.

<sup>43</sup> Demand curves were first deployed in Augustin Cournot, *Researches into the Mathematical Principles of the Theory of Wealth*, trans. Nathaniel T. Bacon (New York: Augustus M. Kelly, 1960). As Frances Edgeworth later noted, Cournot’s curves did not determine

reject a model by allowing for high variance and an inability to choose between competing models on empirical grounds.<sup>44</sup> Akerlof and Kranton are even more clear: A theory's variables can be calibrated to so many different values that there are "literally millions of possible specifications," a situation that is "a nightmare for the logical-positivist economist" seeking empirical confirmation of an existing model.<sup>45</sup> The theory-first approach also establishes a model on the basis of untested assumptions, forcing econometrics to "play the subordinate role of 'quantifying' theoretically meaningful parameters assumed to be empirically relevant on a priori grounds."<sup>46</sup> Models thus become, as Mary Morgan notes, "objects to enquire with."<sup>47</sup> Models are applied to data sets as the basis for attempting to understand that data. This explains why economists like Mark Blaug can argue that "a cursory glance at some leading textbooks in economics suffices to establish the point that the law of demand is asserted as law because of the

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"what price would rule any market" but simply helped "in conjecturing the... general character of the affect which changes... will produce." F.Y. Edgeworth, "On the Application of Mathematics to Political Economy," in *Papers Relating to Political Economy*, vol. II. (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1925), 275. The principle of supply and demand was established long before it had any empirical support, and was influential on early modern efforts at market design.

<sup>44</sup> Juselius, "Evidence in Macroeconomics," 407-8.

<sup>45</sup> George A. Akerlof and Rachel E. Kranton. *Identity Economics: How Our Identities Shape our Work, Wages, and Well-Being* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 115.

<sup>46</sup> Juselius, "Evidence in Macroeconomics," 407-8. Here the economics as religion approach has been particularly helpful in pointing out the ways that these economic assumptions are actually religious in nature. For example, Robert Nelson explores how Samuelson's description of the "market mechanism" is in fact "the most powerful statement of his core values – his underlying secular religion." In reality, economic arguments derived from a utility analysis of various equilibria reached through the market mechanism tend to ignore the dynamic nature of the economy, transaction costs in shifting from one equilibrium point to another, and the irrationality of economic agents. In other words, equilibrium analysis is only valid given a set of assumptions that often do not obtain in the real world. Therefore, in order to defend the market mechanism Samuelson needs to act in a seemingly religious way. He must "count" certain costs, such as moving costs for displaced workers, but not others, such as "psychic pain." Ethical views on usury and self-interest are implicit, and the entirety of the argument for a "market mechanism" relies on a utopian expectation that allows psychic pain to be disregarded in hope for future growth that Nelson finds unobtainable. Nelson *Religion*, 55, 58-66, 70-75.

<sup>47</sup> Mary S. Morgan, *The World in the Model: How Economists Work and Think* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 32.

assessment of evidence” (a point I have challenged above), while simultaneously noting that “it is striking how many textbooks devote pages and pages to... the theory of consumer behavior, while hardly mentioning... the vast literature on the empirical measurement of demand.”<sup>48</sup> In most textbooks, theory is treated as the basis for interpreting data, rather than data as the basis for establishing theory. This is not just a problem in textbooks. When econometricians Keuzenkamp and Magnus published an article challenging economists to name papers whose econometric results significantly changed established theory, they received only sparse examples.<sup>49</sup>

While the above examples should not be taken to indicate that economics is purely a rhetorical affair, they should make economists hesitant to argue that economics is a purely objective science. As I argued in chapter 1, there can be no strong fact/value distinction in economic theory. Insofar as the model as object of enquiry also functions as the basis for the construction of markets, there will always be a dialectical relationship between the correction of models to better represent data, and the correction of markets such that future data better corresponds to models, and this relationship will necessarily allow assumed values to shape markets in particular ways.<sup>50</sup> Therefore I am inclined to agree with Michel Callon:

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<sup>48</sup> Blaug, *Methodology*, 146, 147.

<sup>49</sup> Roger E. Backhouse, *The Puzzle of Modern Economics: Science or Ideology?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 177.

<sup>50</sup> For example, “Just as economists as policy advisors have tried and sometimes succeeded in shaping things economic, so sudden and unexpected changes in economic behaviour and events have equally shaped and prompted changes in economics. Feedback loops go in both directions. It is well understood, for example, that the policy failures of the Great Depression and success of managing demand in World War II were the main factors creating the economic consensus around Keynesian theories of demand management in the immediate post-war period. But then, governments acting under the guidance of the same Keynesian economics – this time embodied in models – were blamed for the ‘stagflation’ that beset economies in the 1970s.” Morgan, *World*, 401-2.

Market laws are neither in the nature of humans and societies – waiting for the scientist, like a prince charming, to wake and reveal them – nor are they constructions or artefacts invented by social sciences in an effort to improvise simple frameworks explaining an opaque and complex reality. They account for regularities progressively enforced by the joint movement of the economy and economics... These regularities perform behaviours and therefore have the obduracy of the real; yet in turn they are performed by these behaviours and therefore have the contingency of an artefact.<sup>51</sup>

I have just argued that many basic models and theorems in economics are not strongly supported by empirical evidence, but does that not entail that the same models are not particularly effective when deployed intentionally toward the end of market construction, or when unintentionally constructive through Barnesian performativity? The answer to this question is quite complicated. On the one hand, it must be admitted that examples of strong Barnesian performativity are significantly less numerous than examples of models showing no such performativity. It is also quite obvious that certain economic models simply fail to depict the business world accurately. For example, an economic model by Lucas and Rapping argues that workers choose layoffs over pay cuts, which is why wages do not decrease in a time of recession. In point of fact, research shows that employees facing a layoff are almost never given a choice between pay cuts and layoffs.<sup>52</sup> The model is simply wrong, as are any number of other models developed by economists. The idea of performativity or of the construction of markets should not be taken to mean that economists are omnipotent in constructing markets that perform perfectly according to design.

Having granted these limitations to performativity, however, it is important that too much is not taken away from my basic thesis. As Vernon Smith's classroom

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<sup>51</sup> Michel Callon, "What Does it Mean to Say That Economics is Performative?" in *Do Economists Make Markets?* eds. Donald MacKenzie, Fabian Muniesa, and Lucia Siu (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 47.

<sup>52</sup> Schlefer, *Assumptions*, 264.

experiments on demand show, markets can be constructed in a particular fashion to ensure that certain models do come to more accurately reflect what happens in the real world. Smith used a different market setup than Chamberlain, and he obtained different data as a result. The possibility of designing the parameters of the object of study is fundamental to the nature of the social sciences. As Ross Miller notes, “Physical scientists must be content with discovering the rules that nature presents to them; social scientists have the ability to make their own rules.”<sup>53</sup> The fact that such rules are made, and that, when made, these rules affect the outcome of market interactions necessitates a rejection of a strong version of the positive/normative distinction, as I argued in chapter 1. The point is made more clearly in the work of Ian Hacking in a way that reveals what is more deeply at stake here. The problem is not only that the rules of a market can be designed by economists. It is even deeper. So Hacking notes that social sciences like economics can create “conscious interactions” between subjects and theories. Economic agents are conscious, and quarks are not. So when an economist describes the market, this description is such that economic agents “can become aware of how they are classified and modify their behavior accordingly.”<sup>54</sup> When constructing markets, an economist also contributes to the construction of a particular awareness by agents operative within the market. What is at stake here is not simply a set of laws or institutions, but more fundamentally the possibility of orthopathy. What sorts of social imaginaries do typical economic models help to disseminate? And what peculiarities of

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<sup>53</sup> Ross Miller, *Paving Wall Street*, 10.

<sup>54</sup> Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 32. Lorna Gold reaches much the same conclusion: “in some ways social theories have the power to create the reality they seek to explain.” Gold, *Horizons*, 25.

economic models make such economic influence on a social imaginary possible? I will answer these questions in reverse order.

### **Economic Models as Constructive Language**

When economists first deployed mathematics in economics, they anticipated sharp resistance.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, a century after mathematics made substantial inroads into economic methodology, J. M. Keynes still had significant reservations about the use of mathematics in economics,<sup>56</sup> reservations shared by key figures in the Austrian school.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, use of mathematics in economics eventually became the dominant practice in large part through the recognition by a number of significant economists like Stanley Jevons, Alfred Marshall (to a lesser extent), and Paul Samuelson that math functioned as a language, and that it could therefore be used to effectively describe the economy.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> See the worries expressed in Cournot, *Mathematical Principles*, 2.

<sup>56</sup> Keynes writes that “It is a great fault of symbolic pseudo-mathematical methods of formalizing a system of economic analysis... that they expressly assume strict independence between the factors involved and lose all their cogency and authority if this hypothesis is disallowed; whereas, in ordinary discourse, where we are not blindly manipulating but know all the time what we are doing and what the words mean, we can keep ‘at the back of our heads’ the necessary reserves and qualifications and the adjustments which we shall have to make later on, in a way in which we cannot keep complicated partial differentials ‘at the back’ of several pages of algebra which assume that they all vanish. Too large a proportion of recent ‘mathematical’ economics are merely concoctions, as imprecise as the initial assumptions they rest on, which allow the author to lose sight of the complexities and interdependencies of the real world in a maze of pretentious and unhelpful symbols.” John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Unemployment, Interest, and Money*, in *The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes*, Vol. 7. (London: MacMillan, 1973), 297-8.

<sup>57</sup> Ludwig von Mises is perhaps the most vitriolic in his critique of mathematical economics. “The mathematical method must be rejected not only on account of its barrenness. It is an entirely vicious method, starting from false assumptions and leading to fallacious inferences. Its syllogisms are not only sterile; they divert the mind from the study of the real problems and distort the relations between the various phenomena.” Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action: A Treatise on Economics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), 347.

<sup>58</sup> Jevons argues “The symbols of mathematical books are not different in nature from language; they form a perfected system of language, adapted to the notions and relations which we need to express.” Marshall tended to avoid the use of mathematics in the main body of his textbook, but he still admitted that, “a training in mathematics is helpful by giving command over a marvelously terse and exact language for expressing clearly some general relations and some

Indeed, Robert Litan is correct to claim that mathematics has become the “lingua franca of academic economics.”<sup>59</sup>

The fact that mathematics is a language explains in part why mathematical models can shape a social imaginary.<sup>60</sup> Castoriadis recognized that the symbolic content of a social imaginary was contained in both language and institutions,<sup>61</sup> and so it is only reasonable to expect that mathematical language will transmit some symbolic elements and thereby shape a social imaginary. The social imaginary may then, in turn, influence people to imagine the world in such a way that their actions more strongly align with the predictions of economic theory. Fabrizio, Pfeffer, and Sutton put the matter nicely:

[Economic] theories can become self-fulfilling because they provide a language for comprehending the world. Language affects what people see, how they see it, and the social categories and descriptors they use to interpret their reality. It shapes what people notice and ignore and what they believe is and is not important.<sup>62</sup>

While the linguistic nature of mathematics may suggest that economic models can shape a social imaginary, the nature of the object of most economic study provides even more compelling reasons to expect such influence. Earlier I argued that a market is an

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short processes of economic reasoning.” Samuelson writes, “Mathematics is language... In principle, mathematics cannot be worse than prose in economic theory; in principle, it certainly cannot be better than prose. For in deepest logic – and leaving out all tactical and pedagogical questions – the two media are strictly identical.” W. Stanley Jevons, *The Theory of Political Economy*, fourth ed. (London: MacMillan and Co., 1911), 5. Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, eighth ed. (London: MacMillan & Co., 1961), 644. Paul Samuelson, “Economic Theory and Mathematics: An Appraisal,” in *The Collected Scientific Papers of Paul A. Samuelson, Vol. II*, ed. Joseph E. Stiglitz (Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1966), 1751.

<sup>59</sup> Litan, *Trillion Dollar Economists*, 14.

<sup>60</sup> At times, theologians have recognized this fact. For example, Nimi Wariboko writes: “The language that is accounting represents a veritable means through which the idea of finance encodes and maps the universal network of causes and effects of claims in any society... The fundamental accounting equation is not merely a mathematical expression but a neat and discerning summation of a worldview.” Nimi Wariboko, *Economics in Spirit and Truth: A Moral Philosophy of Finance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 39-40.

<sup>61</sup> Castoriadis, *Institution*, 117.

<sup>62</sup> Ferraro Fabrizio, Jeffrey Pfeffer, and Robert I. Sutton, “Economics Language and Assumptions: How Theories can Become Self-Fulfilling,” *Academy of Management Review* 30.1 (Jan. 2005): 9.

enduring, constructed, and imagined space, but I have been somewhat equivocal to this point in my argument insofar as markets are constructed in two senses. First, markets are institutions guided by specific sets of policies and regulations, and economists frequently design these institutions and policies. The market is constructed as these institutions and policies are enacted. Second, and more significant for the question at hand, is the fact that the markets that are constructed by an institution like the Federal Reserve Bank (as guided by certain policies and regulations put forward by economists), just to cite one regulator, are themselves socially constructed along with the very regulators and institutions themselves. By this I mean that an economic entity like the Fed regulates money, but money only functions as money insofar as it is a collective representation dependent upon the human imagination to function. Money, like countless other objects of economic study, is, in the words of Philip Goodchild, merely “an expression of a vision and awareness.”<sup>63</sup>

The concept of social constructionism is all too often used with a degree of imprecision, so it is necessary to pause for a moment to consider what I mean by the term in this context. My account here will largely follow that of John Searle, who prefers to speak of “social facts,” a term applicable to any collective intentionality, and “institutional facts,” or facts that depend upon a particular institution.<sup>64</sup> For social facts, the “attitude that we take toward the phenomenon is constitutive of the phenomenon.”<sup>65</sup> As soon as we stop treating money as legal tender, that money ceases to exist as money and is reduced to a curious piece of metal or paper. That this is the case leads Searle to

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<sup>63</sup> Goodchild, *Money*, 19.

<sup>64</sup> John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 26-7.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.



conclude that institutional facts like money (and the same could be said of a large number of other economic realities, including markets, stocks, patents, or property) are dependent on the human institution of language.<sup>66</sup> “Mental representations” are “partly constitutive” of the institutional fact; we have to collectively recognize a piece of paper as money for it to be so. Moreover, “the representations in question” are “language dependent.”<sup>67</sup> Searle reaches this conclusion based in part on his understanding of the form an institutional fact takes: X counts as Y in C. So a piece of paper (X) counts as money (Y) in the context of a financial transaction in a nation-state where the specific money is recognized as legal tender (C). To assign a new Y role to an X term “is precisely to assign it a symbolizing or linguistic status.”<sup>68</sup> Only when a physical object receives such symbolic and linguistic significance, being represented in a way that can be “publicly understood,” can it function as an institutional fact.<sup>69</sup> Interestingly, Searle notes that performative speech acts are often, though not always, responsible for the creation of an institutional fact. One can simply state “this meeting is adjourned” for that institutional fact to obtain.<sup>70</sup> Perhaps this connection between institutional facts and performative utterances helps explain the notion of economic performativity discussed above. While models seek to describe institutional facts, they are equally capable of creating new institutional facts by creating new public understanding.

Recognizing that the objects of economic theory are institutional facts helps to explain how economic models shape the social imaginary. Models attempt to describe

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<sup>66</sup> Searle is quite clear that language is a human institution and that institutional facts are “language dependent.” *Ibid.*, 27, 62.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 60-61.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-5.

institutional facts but in this act of description they also perpetuate a particular linguistic or symbolic understanding constitutive of these facts. When models are used to construct a market there can be a direct influence from the models to a social imaginary insofar as the institutional facts constitutive of the market become recognized by the general public, the members of which must then continuously complete shared acts of language-dependent recognition for the institutional facts to indeed be factual. In other words, the very existence of the market depends upon a sustained and shared social imaginary within which the particular institutional facts constitutive of the market are intelligible or else these institutional facts themselves will cease to obtain and the market itself will disappear. This is the strongest and most obvious connection between models and social imaginaries, though the influence of an education in economics, of economic literature, and of the interaction between economists and non-economists may also allow some connection between models and the social imaginary. Searle helps us see clearly that models are language about institutional facts, and so they must doubly convey imaginary symbols: first, through the mathematical language that is the model, and second, through the linguistic collective understanding that constitutes the institutional facts constructed and regulated through the application of economic models.<sup>71</sup>

The conclusions that Searle reaches are in certain respects found in economic literature as well, though in less philosophical form. Economists, psychologists, and

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<sup>71</sup> Note that this is a very different argument than is made by Deirdre McClosky, who argues that all sciences, including economics, are rhetorical. She believes there should be no distinction between literature and science. Science is simply a precise literary form. I recognize a distinction between physical sciences and the humanities, even though it must be admitted that physical sciences are linguistic insofar as they are expressed through language. I simply suggest that the linguistic nature of the object of economic science distinguishes it from the physical sciences. Deirdre N. McClosky, *The Rhetoric of Economics*, second edition (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 20-23.

sociologists have explicitly addressed the question of whether or not economic theory can contribute to a shift in what I have called a social imaginary. Perhaps the most well known example is a study by Ruth Ames and Gerald Marwell, who conducted eleven experiments to test what is known in economic theory as the “free rider” problem.<sup>72</sup> According to conventional theory, a public good is something that can be used by numerous people simultaneously, but in a context where it is difficult to exclude anyone from benefitting from this good. Persons who choose to benefit from these goods without contributing toward their costs are called “free riders.”<sup>73</sup> Marwell and Ames’s experiments revealed that the free rider problem was generally much smaller than anticipated, with one notable exception. An experiment conducted among economics graduate students manifested the free rider problem much more significantly than any other experiment. Furthermore, surveys conducted after the experiments found that the economics students were “half as likely as other subjects to indicate that they were ‘concerned with fairness’ in their decisions during the experiment.”<sup>74</sup> Ames and Marwell reached two widely discussed and debated conclusions about this anomaly: first, economists tended to think differently than other subject groups, and second, this measurable difference is either learned by students of economics or demonstrable of a tendency among more selfish (perhaps economically “rational”?) individuals to select economics as a major.

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<sup>72</sup> Gerald Marwell and Ruth E. Ames, “Economists Free Ride, Does Anyone Else? Experiments on the Provision of Public Goods, IV,” *Journal of Public Economics* 15 (1981): 295-310.

<sup>73</sup> Neva Goodwin, Julie A. Nelson, Frank Ackerman, and Thomas Weisskopf, *Microeconomics in Context*, second edition (Amonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2009), 22.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

Evidence is mixed as to the validity of Marwell and Ames's conclusions. In a noteworthy experiment, Carter and Irons performed tests using an ultimatum bargaining experiment.<sup>75</sup> In this standard economic experiment, one subject receives \$10 that must then be split with a fellow participant. The subject can offer any fraction of the \$10 to her partner, but if the partner turns down the offer, neither individual keeps any money. According to standard game theory, the subject should offer a minimal amount to her partner, which the partner should accept because any amount is better than no reward. Carter and Irons found that economics students did act differently, offering less money and also accepting less than peers majoring in a different discipline. Economists did think differently. However, Carter and Irons detect no difference between first year economics students and upperclassmen, and therefore concluded that differences in mindset are not learned. On the other hand, Frank, Gilovich, and Regan performed a number of experiments to reach the opposite conclusion of Carter and Irons.<sup>76</sup> One test performed at the beginning and end of a semester addressed whether or not students would perform "dishonest" actions for a higher payout if there was no risk of repercussion. This test showed that students at the end of a semester of economics training tended to be more dishonest than those without economics instruction during the semester, especially in courses with a high emphasis on game theory and utility-maximizing rationality. In another study, Frank, Gilovich, and Regan found that economics students tended to fail the prisoner's dilemma (a form of game requiring cooperation for success) as predicted by economic theory. Furthermore, they failed more often than non-economics students. In

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<sup>75</sup> John R. Carter and Michael D. Irons, "Are Economists Different, and If So, Why?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 5.2 (Spring 1991): 171-177.

<sup>76</sup> Robert H. Frank, Thomas Gilovich, and Dennis T. Regan, "Does Studying Economics Inhibit Cooperation?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7.2 (Spring 1993): 159-171.

a sample of students from a variety of majors and years of study, successful completion of the game through cooperation increased as students neared graduation, with one exception: “this trend is conspicuously absent for economics majors.”<sup>77</sup> It seems that the formal study of economics may indeed influence behavior by changing the way that subjects experience the world.

I am not only arguing that formal education in economics changes one’s social imaginary. The study of models can shape an imaginary, but so too can participation in institutions shaped by such models and intentionally constructed to influence human behavior in a particular manner. These institutions retain a residual symbolic significance derived from and perpetuated by the model, but a human subject can begin to inhabit a different imaginary without needing to be aware of the models contributing either directly or indirectly to a given imaginary. Institutions can therefore create practices that function as “liturgies,” to use the terminology of James K. A. Smith.<sup>78</sup> They can form human desires and consciousness toward a particular imaginary through repeated actions. While the dominant focus of this work is on how social imaginaries make certain actions possible, this reverse influence cannot be forgotten: certain habitual actions can form an imaginary. However, any routine practices resulting in formation are dependent upon a prior formation by an imaginary that makes these routines intelligible and therefore possible in the first place. It is this prior formation that is the focus of this chapter. The very recognition of a market as a market will shape the imaginary of any market participant.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>78</sup> Smith uses the term “liturgy” to denote “rituals of ultimate concern: rituals that are formative of identity, that inculcate particular visions of the good life, and do so in a way that means to trump other ritual formations.” Smith, *Desiring*, 86.

If you read economic literature closely, you will find economists admitting to shifts in perception as a result of economic changes, though often such admissions are brief and their significance is not considered. Returning to the example of the fines for late parents at a child-care center introduced at the beginning of the chapter, we see economists admitting that a shift in the perspective of parents who began to think of picking up their children late in terms of a market transaction with a fixed price creates different behaviors. Similarly, I noted above that economists were influential in the creation of a volunteer military. Analyzing this history, economists Asch, Miller, and Warner admit that the transition from a conscription to a volunteer army is in part accompanied by a shift from a patriotic sense of obligation and a concern for moral rightness to a more economic cost/benefit mindset.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, economist John MacMillan explores how different understandings of the labor market between Silicon Valley in California and Route 128 in Boston allowed Silicon Valley to be more effective in software design. No compete contracts were strongly enforced in Boston, but not in Silicon Valley. As a result a “culture of sharing” and “job hopping” emerged in Silicon Valley, where software engineers would openly share ideas from their firm with competing firms collaboratively, partly because if they had a good reputation they might get a better job at the competitor’s firm, partly because they may have once worked with engineers in the competing firm. “The spreading of ideas through job-hopping is not in the interest of the firm that does the innovating, for it dilutes the firm’s returns. But the industry as a whole advances, on the strength of every firm’s ideas.”<sup>80</sup> Here economic success is attributable to a different imaginary that eschews competition between

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<sup>79</sup> Asch, Miller, and Warner, “Military Force,” 256, 259.

<sup>80</sup> John MacMillan, *Reinventing the Bazaar* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), 114.

technology firms and encourages collaboration. Such examples in economic literature are surprisingly common, but they remain peripheral to economic theory. We must therefore now consider their often-ignored theological significance.

### **The Construction of Markets and the Creation that Reveals the Father**

Mathematical economic models are a form of performative language capable of conveying symbolic meanings that modify a social imaginary, especially when models are deployed toward the end of constructing markets. The constructed and therefore contingent nature of markets alone should give economists a reason to grant theologians and ethicists a voice in economic affairs. Consider a recent constructed market for dating: *whatsyourprice.com*, a website allowing men to bid for dates with women. If the offered price is agreeable, both parties meet for a date that begins with a transfer of money from the man (cheekily called the “generous” one) to his date (the “beautiful” one).<sup>81</sup> Surely, there is room here for theologians to question whether the construction of such a market is moral and to explore how such a market may inform a particular imaginary by shifting the symbolic significance of dating relationships embedded in the particular institution of this market.<sup>82</sup> While this example illustrates the point in the extreme, given that all markets are contingent constructions and that each construction contributes to the formation of a particular imaginary there is reason to believe theology can contribute to analysis of markets that less obviously violate moral standards insofar as such markets are also constructed and also perpetuate a certain form of social imaginary. The fact that markets by virtue of their constructed nature sustain a certain imaginary explains why

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<sup>81</sup> Litan, *Trillion Dollar Economists*, 150.

<sup>82</sup> Similar theological and ethical evaluations could of course be made for any kind of exchange. The point is most clearly illustrated with an extreme case.

economics has what Robert Nelson would call an “economic theology,”<sup>83</sup> or what John Milbank would call “theodicy” and an ideology that results in “redefinition of Christian virtue.”<sup>84</sup> In their basic contours, both Radical Orthodoxy and the economics as religion approach are correct that economics exceeds mere description and has an inescapable theological dimension.

The constructed and imaginary nature of markets also provides guidance to theologians concerning what sort of voice theology should have when addressing economic questions. The various possible constructions of markets that exist both in theory and in the real world resist easy blanket rejections or endorsements by theologians. There is certainly a shortcoming here in much of theological discourse on economics, given that many authors tend to debate the merits of “capitalism.” In point of fact, capitalism simply refers to any economic system where factors of production are owned predominantly by the private sector and exchanged primarily in some market context.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Robert H. Nelson, “What is Economic Theology?” *Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, 25.1 (2004): 59-79.

<sup>84</sup> Milbank, *Social Theory*, 47.

<sup>85</sup> There is general consensus in texts dealing with comparative economic systems that the basic elements of capitalism are private ownership of property and exchange through a market system, though most also acknowledge shortcomings in the use of the word “capitalism” due to its generic and politically charged nature. For example, while Lane and Ersson classify capitalism as consisting of predominantly private ownership coupled with a predominantly market allocation mechanism, they note “the difficult problem is, however, the extent to which *actually existing institutions* in market allocation or budget allocation come close to the ideal type starting point.” Jan-Erik Lane and Svante Ersson, *Comparative Political Economy* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1990), 16. See also Steven Rosefield, *Comparative Economic Systems: Culture, Wealth, and Power in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 42-3; Rolf Eidem and Staffan Viotti, *Economic Systems: How Resources are Allocated* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978), 3. Schnitzer and Nordyke use a much more complex definition of capitalism that includes elements such as the profit motive, competition, individualism, work ethic, and limited government. Against the definition offered by Schnitzer and Nordyke, it should be noted that capitalist economies can and in many instances do rely on cooperation instead of competition. They can also be compatible with objectives other than profit maximization. It seems that such an approach too easily confuses “capitalism” with what is known as “Washington Consensus” capitalism. Martin C. Schnitzer and James W. Nordyke, *Comparative Economic Systems*, third ed.



Rejections of capitalism tend to ignore the wide range of theoretical models and market constructions that can be deployed within such a system and the range of social imaginaries that can make sense of such exchanges. Here Daniel Bell serves as a fitting dialogue partner, precisely because he is one of the most able theologians challenging capitalism today. While Bell is someone who raises excellent criticisms, he does so against a target that should be defined with more specificity. As noted in chapter 1, Bell persuasively argues that the economy can shape desires, and he rightly identifies a form of market economy dependent upon the *homo economicus* that does not understand basic categories such as freedom, rationality, justice, and desire in a theologically acceptable manner. However, Bell treats such a problematic view as endemic of “capitalism” in general. Closer analysis of footnotes in relevant chapters reveals that Bells’ primary dialogue partners, such as Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, and Michael Novak, are all advocates of particular varieties of capitalist theory. In point of fact, what Bell has refuted is not capitalism *per se*, but rather several specific forms of capitalism: Austrian or Chicago school influenced models and market constructions guided by a particular public policy platform.<sup>86</sup> While Bell does at times offer greater specificity, condemning, for

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(Cincinnati, OH: South-Western Publishing, 1983), 3. Joseph Stiglitz helpfully summarizes the Washington Consensus as focused on “downscaling of government, deregulation, and rapid liberalization and privatization.” Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Making Globalization Work* (New York: Norton, 2007), 17. Marxist influenced approaches to economic systems tend to emphasize the roles of specific classes in modes of production, eschewing private ownership of factors of production to emphasize how specific non-governmental economic groups monopolize on such ownership. Nevertheless, such definitions still treat market allocation through non-government owned factors of production as essential to the nature of capitalism. For example, see Manuel Gottlieb, *A Theory of Economic Systems* (Orlando, FL: Academic Press, 1984), 80-89.

<sup>86</sup> See especially Bell, *Economy of Desire*, 94-117, where Bell summarizes what he calls “capitalist anthropology.” In point of fact, his quite accurate critique of the *homo economicus* focuses primarily on a handful of likeminded theologians and economists. Bell cites Friedrich von Hayek in twenty-four notes (n. 8, 10, 16, 20, 21, 25, 26, 38, 39, 48, 51, 55, 59, 60, 68, 71, 74, 77, 82, 83, 87, 92, 93, 94), Michael Novak in thirteen notes (n. 1, 5, 15, 17, 80, 81, 88, 91, 95, 96, 98, 99, 100), Adam Smith in nine notes (n. 29, 30, 41, 57, 61, 63, 72, 73, 76) and Milton Friedman in

example, the “the neoliberal economic vision,” as a whole his work speaks of “capitalist theology.”<sup>87</sup> Given the wide range of possible market constructions and associated imaginaries, it does not obviously follow from an accurate condemnation of the *homo economicus* as advocated by the Chicago and Austrian schools that there is no theologically acceptable form of capitalism. There may indeed be an acceptable form of market where factors of production are privately held and traded through a market structure. In fact, several of the perspectives explored in chapter 1, such as economic personalism and the redistributionist approach, reject the *homo economicus* for similar reasons as Bell,<sup>88</sup> while affirming the basic capitalist emphases on market interactions

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seven (n. 3, 6, 18, 28, 32, 37, 57). Also making noteworthy appearances are Margaret Thatcher (n. 7), Frank Knight (n. 35), James Buchanan (n. 31), and Gary Becker (n. 36, 40, 57). While Bell does mention other perspectives on occasion, citing Amartya Sen twice (n. 24, 40) and mentioning the “new institutionalism,” it is clear that his criticism applies mainly to an associated group of economists connected with the Mont Pèlerin Society, founded by Friedrich von Hayek. Friedman and Knight were founding members of the Mont Pelerin Society, an initially small organization designed to promote the liberal political and economic ideals of a free society through the interaction of a number of major academic figures. The first meeting’s convocation was explicitly and self-consciously in the spirit of Adam Smith, and major neoliberal figures such as Novak, Buchanan and Becker continue to join the society’s ranks up to the present. Hayek, Friedman, Becker, and Buchanan are, in fact, former presidents of the society, whose ideas were greatly influential on Thatcher. The group Bell criticizes is closely knit indeed. For a helpful discussion of the society, see Richard Crockett, *Thinking the Unthinkable: Think-Tanks and the Economic Counter-Revolution, 1931-1983* (London: HarperCollins, 1994), 100-121. A similar point could be made for many theologians who are critical of “capitalism.”

<sup>87</sup> Bell is aware of the limited scope of his analysis, defending his position on the grounds that neoliberal economic theory is the dominant and majority position. Bell, *Economy of Desire*, 22-24; cf. Bell, *Economy of Desire*, 101. Even granting this, however, it seems a methodological mistake to continue to discuss “capitalism” and not “neoliberalism.” “Capitalist Theology” is the title of chapter 4.

<sup>88</sup> While he does not explicitly treat the *homo economicus*, personalist Richard Bayer rejects a liberal anthropology embodied in the works of John Rawls, Robert Nozick, and Michael Walzer that bears a striking resemblance to the “capitalist” anthropology that Bell describes. In the end, Bayer advocates a view of the person rooted in positive freedom, communitarian social relations, and equality, while rejecting progress as technological advancement. While there are certainly differences between Bayer’s and Bell’s theological anthropology, Bayer would not fit with many of the criticisms Bell puts to “capitalist” anthropology. Bayer, *Capitalism*, 73-131. See also Gold, *Horizons*, 182-3; Donohue-While, *Human Nature*, 103-4; O’Boyle, “Requiem.” Admittedly, Bell’s analysis of the *homo economicus* is in certain respects more sophisticated than the analysis offered by some of the latter authors.

and privately held factors of production.<sup>89</sup> For example, while Edward O’Boyle’s definition of capitalism is much more thorough than the one I have presented (it includes twelve elements),<sup>90</sup> he ultimately affirms that “the very real interaction between buyers and sellers... is the formal cause of economic change,” but contrasts such an understanding with “the impersonal operation of product markets” that is “the formal cause of economic change according to mainstream economics.”<sup>91</sup> In the end, market structures are not what O’Boyle is challenging as much as a particular imaginary often associated with markets that views them as impersonal and natural. In fact, while personalist economics and the redistributionist approach often claim to be a “third way” between capitalism and communism, they are technically speaking a deviant form of capitalism seeking to modify the purpose of markets and to reconstruct markets accordingly.

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<sup>89</sup> Gold argues that the Focolare movement’s Economy of Communion serves to “highlight the existence of different perspectives on economic life within the global market and reflect specific values and behaviors.” The need for a free market itself is largely unchallenged. Gold, *Horizons*, 29. Médaille believes that real capitalism ended in 1929, but his defense of distributism calls for a reduction in governmental policies that intervene in the market to privilege a powerful few and for a re-localization of the market, not for centralized control. Factors of production would remain in the hands of the private sector, where “workers own the capital they create.” Thus, while he does not consider his system capitalism, it fits a technical definition. Médaille, *Truly Free Market*, 135-6, 235-253. Bayer endorses a “share economy” but insists that this economy is a “compelling nonstatist solution” where factors of production remain in the private sector. Bayer claims to move beyond a “market system” but in fact describes the construction of an alternative market with different profit sharing mechanisms, a rejection of a “wage system” for a “share system.” However, there is no talk of labor, goods, or capital being allocated through any system other than a market. The market is just guided by a different set of rules and objectives. Bayer, *Capitalism*, 148-154, 167.

<sup>90</sup> O’Boyle identifies capitalism as a system built around private property, private control and decision making, markets, competition, freedom, consumer sovereignty, meritocracy, allocation by price, creative destruction, private creation of credit, and the risk of unmet need, and that the system faces the dilemma of instability due to inability to allocate resources to meet all needs. O’Boyle, *Personalist Economics*, 66. Note the emphasis on private property and market allocation. At other points, O’Boyle refers more precisely to “mainstream economics,” “conventional economics,” or “contemporary mainstream economics.” For example, *Ibid.*, 78-79. It seems that the main conflict is with a particular variety of economic theory.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-9.

The legitimizing approach fares much less favorably than Bell in light of the fact that markets are constructed, a reality many theologians in this approach miss.<sup>92</sup> Even those who do tend to see the market as constructed fail to acknowledge the full diversity of possible constructions. Jay Richards rightly critiques Hayek's claim that a market emerges spontaneously<sup>93</sup> and even endorses a theology comparable to the one developed in chapter 2: "Christians should see [the market order] as God's way of providentially governing the actions of billions of free agents in a fallen world."<sup>94</sup> While it must be granted that God providentially works through the market (just as God worked through the Feudal system, mercantilism, and communism, for God works through all things – Rom. 8:28), we must ask which market construction is most open to cooperation with the divine plan of God, a question Richards largely neglects. Here his specific analysis contrasts capitalism and communism rather than possible market constructions, exploring, for example, how free markets allow for win-win exchanges while forced markets in the Soviet Union result in poor quality commodities and services.<sup>95</sup> Richards

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<sup>92</sup> For example, Grudem and Asmus describe a "free-market system" as "one in which economic production and consumption are determined by the free choices of individuals rather than by governments, and this process is grounded in private ownership of the means of production." While the authors avoid the term "capitalism" because they believe it has different connotations to different audiences, they are offering exactly the technical definition of capitalism presented above. The authors insist that "governments do not have to create free markets," and that markets are "an exquisitely complicated process that emerges spontaneously from the enlightened self-interest of billions of people." Grudem and Asmus equally insist that there is "biblical support" for private property, limited government, and human freedom in the market. Wayne Grudem and Barry Asmus, *The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 131-2, 140, 164, 139. The end result of this approach is an argument that claims capitalism is the biblically legitimate economic system, but that entirely ignores the various possible market formations within capitalism, the formative influences of these possible formations, or the significant theological and biblical questions raised by such formations. These objections stand even if Grudem and Asmus make no mistakes on any of their economic or exegetical claims.

<sup>93</sup> Jay Richards, *Money, Greed, and God*, 223.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

thus ignores the well known economic literature on how various market constructions can, indeed, create losers in a free market.<sup>96</sup> More importantly, Richards, like many in the legitimizing approach, ignores any role that the market may have in the formation of an economic agent. As noted in chapter 1, the legitimizing approach is at its strongest when it considers various possible constructions of the market in a capitalist system and discerns which constructions are legitimate. In other words, even if capitalism as an economic system is demonstrably superior to other alternatives (on either theological or economic grounds), questions still remain concerning what models should be used to construct particular markets and how the resulting markets may shape underlying social imaginaries. Asserting the validity of capitalism does next to nothing to establish how markets should function and how markets shape human beings. It does not answer the question, to cite Bell approvingly here, of what sort of work markets do.<sup>97</sup> Even the more discerning of theologians addressing the legitimacy of particular economic constructions, like Daniel Finn, tend to underemphasize these questions.<sup>98</sup>

If endorsing or rejecting an entire economic system without addressing various possible market constructions is an inadequate theological approach, so too is any approach that assumes the objective fixity of markets and that is concerned primarily with how theology can help improve predictive accuracy of economic models through a more accurate representation of human beings as created in the image of God. Economic

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<sup>96</sup> Standard microeconomic problems resulting in market failures include: monopoly, free riders, externalities, information asymmetries, moral hazard, and problems surrounding public goods. For a concise but thorough summary of these problems, see Avinash Dixit, *Microeconomics: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 67-98.

<sup>97</sup> Bell, *Economy*, 83-4.

<sup>98</sup> Finn surveys various critiques of “markets” as a whole that suggest some malformation occurs, but he does little to evaluate these criticisms in the context of his discussion of the moral ecology of markets, where he highlights the diversity of possible market constructions. Finn, *Ecology*, 70-74.

personalism often falls into this pattern of thought.<sup>99</sup> Prediction cannot validate a particular theologically informed set of economic models precisely because the object of study is not autonomous from the models being assessed through empirical analysis. Nor is it adequate to grant economic thought such independence that it can be taken as the basis for theological analysis of human economic actions, a position thoroughly articulated by Clodovis Boff and broadly influential among liberation theologians. Boff argues, “any theological reading of any socio-historical phenomenon whatsoever will include or imply a conscious or unconscious theory.”<sup>100</sup> Boff rightly notes that “facts” are constructed, much to the extent and in the fashion I have argued above with respect to economic facts in the market, and he therefore rejects a dichotomy between theory and praxis.<sup>101</sup> To use the terminology discussed above, we might call these facts social facts. However, he wrongly concludes that theology’s task is to “deliver religious significations” and that such significations “can arise only from a point of departure in the real as really known.”<sup>102</sup> Boff concludes that social sciences therefore are related to theology by a “relationship of constitution,” whereby the social sciences will “share in a vital way” in the theology of which they are a part. “The political will be knowable by the theologian only through the approach of the sciences of the social.”<sup>103</sup> Such socio-analytic mediation is untenable when considered in terms of social imaginaries, wherein concrete practices and theories are themselves the repositories of the symbolic such that the “real” uncovered by the social sciences (a real consisting of social facts) is already

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<sup>99</sup> This is particularly the case for the *Foundations of Economic Personalism* series. See Beabout, *Self-Interest*, 3, 32-33, 104; Donohue-White, *Human Nature*, 94, 103; Santelli, *Free Person*, 77.

<sup>100</sup> Clodovis Boff, *Theology and Praxis*, 21.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

and inevitably embedded in significations that are, according to Boff's understanding of theology, properly the object of theological scrutiny. As Castoriadis writes, a social imaginary "is the unceasing and essentially *undetermined* (social-historical and psychical) creation of figures/forms/images, on the basis of which alone there can ever be a question of 'something.' What we call 'reality' and 'rationality' are its works."<sup>104</sup> There is no reality accessible to us that is prior to or apart from the significations and images that allow us to pursue the real. Therefore, theology is not related to the social sciences in general or to economics in particular in a relationship of constitution, nor is the relationship between the two disciplines best depicted in terms of a relationship of dependence on the mediation of facts through social theory.<sup>105</sup> Rather, theology must approach economics (like any social science) as a repository of theological significance capable of forming orthopathic or heteropathic imaginaries within the minds of particular human subjects.

What then are the salient features of theological engagement with possible economic social imaginaries? The efforts of personalists and the redistributionist approach reveal the first step in a transformation of economic models toward orthopathy: a redirection of the *telos* of much economic modeling. If the economy is constructed and if it carries with it a particular contingent imaginary, it should not be taken as natural but

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<sup>104</sup> Castoriadis, *Institution*, 3.

<sup>105</sup> I find here an ally in John Milbank, who rejects Boff for, among several shortcomings, restraining theology such that "it is only permitted to extrapolate regulatively the significance already implied in the social scientific account." Milbank, *Social Theory*, 253. Indeed, once it is recognized that significations are necessarily within the social sciences, which are in turn therefore necessarily theological, the choice is either to eliminate the role of theology by ceding epistemological priority and thus priority in signification to the social sciences, or else mandating, as the radical orthodoxy movement has, a theological voice in all social spaces.

must rather be recognized as problematizable.<sup>106</sup> Bell is right to recognize that the dominant economic schools of thought are theologically heterodox, directed toward an improper *telos*. However, he is wrong to reject “capitalism” *in toto* precisely because privately held factors of production can more easily be directed toward a new *telos* without resorting to the use of statecraft or the superagency of the state to reach this goal.<sup>107</sup> Rather, individual firms and consumers can re-orient their actions toward a new end in a way that shapes the significations associated with institutional facts, thereby shifting a social imaginary.<sup>108</sup> To give a rather simplistic example, money may be understood not only as store of value and medium of exchange, but as a basis for helping those in need. Such a shift may admittedly require certain regulatory and policy changes such that markets can be constructed in alternate ways toward alternate ends, but there need be no centralized control of these markets, and participation in markets directed toward a moral end can be optional. While skeptics are sure to suggest that a firm not seeking profit maximization is doomed to failure, successful ventures like the Mondragon

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<sup>106</sup> Karl Smith helpfully identifies this as one of Castoriadis’s important contributions. Karl E. Smith, *Meaning, Subjectivity, Society: Making Sense of Modernity* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 23.

<sup>107</sup> This is something broadly condemned in theological circles. See, for example, Sung, *Desire*, 119; Bell, *Liberation Theology*, 43-4; Thomas E. Woods, Jr., *The Church and the Market: A Catholic Defense of the Free Economy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), 205.

<sup>108</sup> Here William Cavanaugh underestimates the potential latent within individual economic agents and firms when he concludes that “free-market economics” requires that “freedom is maximized in the absence of a *telos*,” and raises theological objections to negative freedom accordingly. William Cavanaugh, *Being Consumed: Economics and Christian Desire* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 10. Besides being another example of imprecision in defining an economic school of thought (what exactly counts as “free-market economics”?), Cavanaugh is committing the fallacy of composition by assuming that what is true of the whole must be true of all the parts. In point of fact, individual agents or firms in a “free market” that is constructed with the goal of a negative freedom that lacks a *telos* may still individually operate according to a *telos* and obtain theologically acceptable positive freedom. It may just be that such a microeconomic approach is preferable because it avoids reliance on the state. Interestingly, Cavanaugh himself goes on to advocate precisely such a microeconomic approach, arriving at what I believe are the correct conclusions. *Ibid.*, 24-32.



corporation or the Economy of Communion, discussed in chapter 1, show that this need not be the case, and further case studies will follow in chapter 5.<sup>109</sup> Redirecting the *telos* of markets is an important first step toward orthopathy that avoids the need to reject capitalism as an economic system, but on its own it is quite inadequate in that it ignores the formative nature of markets. Additional efforts must be made to shape economic agents into the types of individuals who can successfully pursue an alternate *telos*.

The linguistic nature of economic models leads us to a second important role for theology in the development of models. Models impact a social imaginary partially by inscribing particular symbolic resonances in the very mathematical language used to develop models, so part of the task of ensuring orthopathy is discerning whether the mathematical language used is capable of speaking about theologically pertinent matters. Theology can assess mathematical language in two respects. First, theologians can challenge the variables deployed in models if they do not adequately address all pertinent realities that should be considered. The introduction of new variables allows markets to be evaluated and constructed in entirely new ways. New variables for use in mathematical analysis are equivalent to new words introduced into a vocabulary.<sup>110</sup> Economists have already successfully introduced various concepts like the gini coefficient, which measures inequality, and the concept of gross national happiness. These concepts allow economists to analyze and construct markets from a new reference

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<sup>109</sup> See also the discussion in Kenman L. Wong and Scott B. Rae, *Business for the Common Good: A Christian Vision for the Marketplace* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 30-32.

<sup>110</sup> For a particularly interesting and strange example of the connection between statistical analysis and the creation of new linguistic categories and distinctions, see Emmanuel Didier, "Do Statistics 'Perform' the Economy?" in *Do Economists Make Markets?* eds. Donald MacKenzie, Fabian Muniesa, and Lucia Siu (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 276 – 310. Didier studies early statistical agricultural analysis, and resulting new conceptual distinctions between varieties of pickles.

point, and theologians could identify other theologically significant concepts that economists could translate into their vernacular language.<sup>111</sup> New variables and newly constructed markets will undoubtedly contribute to different formations of the social imaginary. Second, theologians can raise questions that the mathematical language used in modeling is not currently exploring. John D. Mueller is an excellent example of a theologically informed economist exploring new questions through mathematical models. Arguing that the scholastic theologians who explored economics addressed the four major concerns of utility, production, equilibrium, and final distribution, Mueller notes that most contemporary economic models neglect final distribution as a concern.<sup>112</sup> Posing the question of final distribution, Mueller is able to develop new mathematical models that better address issues like homicide, spending, and parenting.<sup>113</sup> One of the main questions that most economists either neglect or relegate to the margins is the question of how economic interactions can shape an economic agent in morally significant ways. Theology must consistently pose this question to economics while striving to expose how assumptions within models may result in maladaptive formations as a central concern when pursuing orthopathy.

Many theologians have explored this formative capability intrinsic in the market, and their conclusions were briefly addressed in chapter 1. For present purposes, it will suffice to highlight several potentially problematic formations of a social imaginary brought about by the market that may hinder our ability to have communion with God.

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<sup>111</sup> Many theologians have already done so. For example, Sallie McFague notes that the Human Development Index does not include information on environmental impact, making it inadequate in the development of the “ecological economy” that she proposes. McFague, *Life*, 114.

<sup>112</sup> Mueller, *Redeeming*, 46.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, chapters 8, 11, and 12.

This is the third and most important role that theology can fulfill in terms of orthopathy, and it is perhaps best embodied by the sort of work being done by theologians in the re-imagining approach, though I will highlight elements not discussed in the examples of this approach explored in chapter 1. The two main problems that theologians must challenge are, first, the de-personalizing nature of economic models, and, second, the naturalizing or objectifying nature of economic models. The de-personalizing nature of economic models is to a certain extent unavoidable whenever models are used insofar as the variables used within models are intended to generalize humans into particular common groups (laborers, investors, consumers, the unemployed, and so forth), while humans as persons are unique and unrepeatable.<sup>114</sup> Proper orthopathy must recognize the unique identity, struggles, and experiences of each person insofar as each person uniquely bears the image of God. Here the spirituality of liberation theology is helpful in pointing to our need to listen to and learn from the unique experiences of the poor rather than reducing them to a statistical label, even if reducing such experiences to a socially constructed class called “the poor” still undermines such uniqueness to a degree.<sup>115</sup>

Reducing a human being to a common attribute represented by a variable is a necessary practice in any mathematical economics, but it also bears the risk of depersonalizing the human beings described by such practices if that mathematical system dominates a social

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<sup>114</sup> This is part of the very definition of person, both in Eastern and Western theology. So Richard of St. Victor could define a person as an “incommunicable existence.” Richard of St. Victor, *On the Trinity*, IV.16. More recently, John Zizioulas writes that “otherness and uniqueness is to be respected on the simple basis of each person’s ontological particularity and integrity.” Uniqueness is a personal category arising from the distinctive hypostatic reality of each person. John D. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church*. (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 86. Both theologians focus on the divine persons, but it is only in light of such divine persons that a full understanding of human personhood is possible.

<sup>115</sup> See, for example, Sobrino, *Spirituality*, 34; Sung, *Desire*, 132-4; Gustavo Gutiérrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People*, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992), 30-32.

imaginary so that persons are primarily understood in terms of that common attribute. Therefore, theology must always clearly strive to re-personalize a social imaginary through proclamation of the gospel. This task is given to the bearers of special grace who make up the Church and who bear witness to the world, and so this role will not be a major focus of this work on common grace.<sup>116</sup>

The naturalizing tendency in certain modern social imaginaries sees the economy as a naturally emerging reality operating according to necessary principles that are central to any understanding of what society actually is in itself.<sup>117</sup> As a natural description of human society, the notion of an economy can flatten the created order so that it is no longer oriented toward redemption or the transcendent work of God, instead throwing off the idea of a *telos* and seeing in the economy itself an order which is, in the words of Charles Taylor, “a sphere of co-existence which could in principle suffice to itself.”<sup>118</sup> On this understanding the economy is not the aggregate of interactions between human beings created in the image of God. If humanity is interpreted in terms of the image of God, then understanding what the economy is will require attention to the transcendent Being whose image humanity bears. For an economy to obtain its goal, human beings would need to fully manifest that image in their economic interactions, and this may indeed require a transformation seen as completing, perfecting, even surpassing the natural.<sup>119</sup> On the other hand, if the economy is viewed as an entirely natural realm, it

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<sup>116</sup> This should not be interpreted to mean that I consider this task unimportant.

<sup>117</sup> The naturalizing account “treats social events like other processes in nature, as following laws of a similar sort.” Taylor, *Imaginaries*, 77.

<sup>118</sup> Taylor, *Secular Age*, 181.

<sup>119</sup> As D. Stephen Long writes, “If we assume the human person is defined by her or his supernatural end, then we will have higher expectations for the role of corporations within the divine economy. They are not understood as neutral vehicles, but theologically significant. Thus,

becomes all too easy to justify capitalism as the naturally occurring spontaneous space that is least damaged by sin due to the fact that natural order emerges as a result of these very sinful actions. Sin becomes determinative rather than the transcendental object of the economy as one manifestation of the order of creation.<sup>120</sup> Sin cannot serve as the justification of capitalism without jeopardizing orthopathy, because making sin determinative of reality rather than parasitic upon it undermines the primacy of the goodness of creation as discussed in Genesis 1 before the emergence of sin in Genesis 3. Instead, capitalism must be viewed as a constructed and therefore contingent reality that, due to its contingency and malleability, can be oriented toward various possible goals, including the transcendent goal of communion with God. It is far better, therefore, to partially justify certain manifestations of capitalism – for no historical economic system is exclusively and clearly the Christian option – as the system which best allows individual agents to concurrently act with God apart from external coercion by the state in a manner that, through common grace, participates in and is oriented toward the divine work of redeeming the Church.<sup>121</sup> Agents in the economy will not and cannot fully understand the redemptively significant formation that an economy saturated by grace brings to pass until such a time as special grace opens their eyes to God’s work, but this does not mean that a capitalism open to working toward the production of virtue cannot

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they must at least do no harm and, at best, they should be ordered by a theological rationality – implicit or explicit.” Long and Fox, *Calculated*, 127.

<sup>120</sup> See particularly the critique raised by Long against what he calls the dominant approach, which largely maps onto what I have called the legitimizing approach. Long argues compellingly that sin cannot become the rational basis for a political or economic system, which is precisely how sin functions among many theologians in the legitimizing approach. Long, *Divine Economy*, 73.

<sup>121</sup> A similar approach is taken by Albino Barrera, who sees economic scarcity as the basis for allowing economic agency to serve as a perfective secondary cause. Albino’s primary focus is theodicy, not the question of the merits of capitalism. Albino Barrera, *God and the Evil of Scarcity: Moral Foundations of Economic Agency* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 28-40.

produce a social imaginary that better prepares one to see special grace, as one who has eyes to see and ears to hear as gifts of the Lord (Prov. 20:12). Nor does it mean that a market ignoring such a possibility and treating sin as determinative and markets as natural and free from moral responsibility<sup>122</sup> cannot produce an imaginary that results in people who having eyes do not see, and having ears do not hear (Mark 8:18).

Despite the need to connect a social imaginary with God's gracious work in history, few theological accounts adequately recognize that any positive formation toward orthopathy through the market must be attributed to the work of God. This recognition is a necessary component of any orthopathic understanding of the economy insofar as (a) all human actions, including those that construct a market, are radically dependent upon concurrent divine action, and (b) any human action that seemingly contributes to an increased capability for communion with God must in point of fact be understood as properly and primarily a work of God's grace and only secondarily a concurrent human work that is radically dependent upon this grace. *Sola gratia* must here be preserved. Moreover, insofar as God is triune, any divine act *ad extra*, including any supervenient divine action in the market contributing to orthopathy, can be properly appropriated to one divine person. When analyzing a social imaginary, we must speak of economic models and particular formations of the market as either participating in or obscuring the Father's general self-revelation. A social imaginary serves as the created term for the possible reception of special revelation by providing an experiential basis within which that revelation and a response in faith are both intelligible. A social

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<sup>122</sup> As noted in chapter 1, some theologians do in fact claim that markets operate according to such strong natural laws that changing the laws of a market should not be seen as a moral obligation. Brand and Pratt, *Seeking*, 802, 836-838. This is the worst form of legitimizing theology.

imaginary is thus the immanent term through which one dimension of redemptively-significant transformation is brought to pass: orthopathy.

If the construction of a particular social imaginary through markets can be seen as part of the divine work of general revelation, this act must be appropriated to the Father. This is the case for three reasons. First, on exegetical grounds we see a scriptural basis for the appropriation insofar as the Old and New Testaments speak repeatedly of God revealing himself through creation (i.e. Ps. 19:1-2, Acts 14:17, Rom. 1:19-20).<sup>123</sup> Second, from a philosophical standpoint, insofar as the social imaginary that is here understood as general revelation is the fount from which various identities and trajectories of action may arise, it properly corresponds to the eternal hypostatic property of the Father as *fons divinitatis*. Third, taking a page from Barth, we can assert that there is one Revealer, the Father, and one Revelation, the Son. Therefore, any talk of general revelation occurring through the market must be rooted in the Father as Revealer insofar as all general revelation is preparatory of and oriented toward the Revelation, the One in whom God is made known (John 1:18, 14:9).

Much as was the case in chapter 2's discussion of common and special grace, general and special revelation must not be seen as a contrastive dichotomy between noetic and salvific knowledge.<sup>124</sup> Rather, general revelation must be seen as preparatory for special revelation such that the divine work of creation (again properly appropriated to the Father)<sup>125</sup> is oriented toward the divine work of redemption accomplished through

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<sup>123</sup> In New Testament practice, the use of *theos* (God) should be interpreted as referring to the Father unless explicit textual connections link the term with the Son or Spirit, something that is hardly the norm. The verses on God's general revelation are no exception.

<sup>124</sup> *pace* Grenz, *Community*, 133.

<sup>125</sup> In Reformed theology creation is classically appropriated to the Father. Muller, *Dogmatics*, 270-1.

the Son.<sup>126</sup> Clarity on this point is decisive: with Barth I affirm that there must be a readiness of humanity toward the revelation of God, and that only in the man Jesus Christ does this readiness perfectly result in such knowledge, so that our knowledge is dependent upon our receiving this readiness by grace while yet unready.<sup>127</sup> The fullness of general revelation is only available through Christ because Christ is the culmination of creation. Yet, Barth goes too far in rejecting general revelation as a viable theological category, particularly as evident in his debate with Emil Brunner. Brunner recognized, as did Barth, that “only the Christian, *i.e.* the man [sic] who stands within the revelation in Christ, has the true natural knowledge of God.”<sup>128</sup> When Barth challenges Brunner to affirm natural revelation and *sola gratia* simultaneously he does well,<sup>129</sup> but he is mistaken in excluding grace from creation. Grace is operative in creation, and so revelation (a particular manifestation of grace oriented toward knowledge of God) must be present in creation in a general manner. As with grace, all revelation is ordered toward communion with God, though general revelation, like common grace, only serves this end in a preparatory manner.

Surely an economist reading this could (understandably) be puzzled at the shift this chapter has taken. Even granting a rejection of a sharp positive/normative distinction, it may not obviously follow that we can therefore introduce theological talk about the

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<sup>126</sup> Norman Gulley helpful clarifies: “General revelation is never given by God as an end in itself, but only as a means to lead to particular revelation.” Norman R. Gulley, *Systematic Theology Vol. 1: Prolegomena* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003), 213. Note the parallel with Kuyper: “All special grace assumes common grace.” Kuyper, *Common Grace*, 169.

<sup>127</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/1 – *The Doctrine of God*, ed. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, trans. T.H.L. Parker, W.B. Johnston, Harold Knight, and J.L.M. Haire (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957), 156.

<sup>128</sup> Emil Brunner, “Nature and Grace,” in *Natural Theology*, trans. Peter Fraenkel (London: Geoffrey Bless, 1946), 27.

<sup>129</sup> Karl Barth, “No! Answer to Emil Brunner,” in *Natural Theology*, trans. Peter Fraenkel (London: Geoffrey Bless, 1946), 80.



Father's work in the economy as acceptable when discussing economic models.

However, returning again to the fact that the objects of economic models are institutional facts, it becomes clear that the shape these objects take is not in the least an empirical matter. Consider again the example of money: "When the Treasury says it is legal tender, they are *declaring* it to be legal tender, not announcing an empirical fact that it is already legal tender," notes Searle.<sup>130</sup> We cannot disallow any specific variety of description on empirical grounds precisely because our very descriptions of institutional facts are constructive of these facts.<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, insofar as models provide us with idealized representations that an economy strives toward through successive efforts at construction, these models always remain out of reach, establishing a set of possible trajectories according to the possibilities latent in the symbolic/linguistic nature of the model. The question of which sets of trajectories are permissible is again not empirically determinable.<sup>132</sup> To put things another way, we can say that a social imaginary is "both factual and normative."<sup>133</sup> There simply is no logical reason why theological language should be excluded in this context, and orthopathy in fact depends upon a particular articulation of God's role in the economy.

It is precisely the fact that all the divine works are oriented toward communion with God that necessitates speaking of divine action in the market. Unless the specific formative elements of the economy are connected with divine action, the God who acts in

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<sup>130</sup> Searle, *Construction*, 55.

<sup>131</sup> Even if empirical demonstration of predictions is produced, that demonstration is only possible insofar as contingent social constructions become objectified. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), 66-7.

<sup>132</sup> See Jung Mo Sung, *The Subject, Capitalism, and Religion: Horizons of Hope in Complex Societies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 4.

<sup>133</sup> Taylor, *Imagines*, 24.

the economy remains hidden behind talk of “liturgies,”<sup>134</sup> or “countering the commodification of religion,”<sup>135</sup> or resistance to “produced desire.”<sup>136</sup> Speaking of triune divine action in the market is therefore part and parcel with a social imaginary obtaining the end for which it was intended: to reveal Father, Son, and Spirit as distinctively working in history toward redemption to the glory of God. Without such language, our awareness of God is diminished and communion is hindered.

At the same time and equally important, theology must make clear what forms of the market are incommensurate with common grace and therefore incompatible with communion between God and humanity. It will not do to simply recognize markets in general as guided by providence without attending to the very real possibility that human sin may prevent participation in the grace on offer through the economy, undermining sanctification and hindering communion. Theologies that fail to attend to the ways that a market can interfere with redemptively significant formation because they identify God working uniformly and identically in all market constructions eventually serve to legitimate systems that corrupt the image of God in human beings and to facilitate oppression, injustice, corruption, and violence. Because God’s work in the economy must be seen as (common) grace, it can never be treated as guaranteed. Here again we must remember the central importance of communion as the goal of redemption history, actively and prayerfully seeking God in the economy with a willingness to repent where such communion requires it. At its core, orthopathy depends on our ability to respond to the Lord’s offer of grace:

Seek the Lord while he may be found;

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<sup>134</sup> Smith, *Desiring*.

<sup>135</sup> Vincent Miller, *Consuming*, 194.

<sup>136</sup> Rieger, *Rising Tide*, 101-116.

call upon him while he is near;  
Let the wicked forsake his way,  
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;  
Let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Isaiah 55:6-7.

## CHAPTER 5 – IDENTITY IN CHRIST AND MARKET

Like all social arrangements that organize consumption and production, market economics has an *identity-moulding* function. Any economic system can potentially provide us with the table, chairs, and coffee to be with our friends. But it will also influence how we think and talk about ourselves – our identity – when we are with our friends.

- Gordon Menzies<sup>1</sup>

In standard neoclassical economic theory labor markets operate according to marginalist logic. Consider how this is expressed in Samuelson and Nordhaus's classic textbook. Marginal product of labor "is the extra product or output added by one extra unit of [labor]."<sup>2</sup> Marginal revenue product of labor refers to the additional revenue a firm gets through the marginal product obtained by hiring an additional worker. Samuelson and Nordhaus are clear: Firms want to maximize profit, and "profit-maximizing equilibrium comes when the wage equals the marginal-revenue-product of [labor]."<sup>3</sup> In other words, all employees fulfilling the same role are paid a wage that equals the additional revenue the firm received when hiring the last employee.

In neoclassical theory wages are indexed to the productivity of labor and to the revenue resulting from such productivity. This fact has several implications. First, if prices for the goods produced drop, then we would expect to see wages drop or layoffs. Second, if demand for a good drops (decreasing revenue and the need for production) we would expect to see wages drop or layoffs. Third, we should expect factors unrelated to productivity to have no significant role in determining wages. As I will shortly demonstrate, such assumptions are frequently the basis of economic policy debates, and

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon Menzies, "Economics as Identity," in *Christian Theology and Market Economics*, eds. Ian R. Harper and Samuel Gregg (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2008), 94.

<sup>2</sup> Paul A. Samuelson and William D. Nordhaus, *Economics*, twelfth edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985), 581.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 587-8.

to varying degrees the United States economy fits the assumption that labor, wages, and productivity are all fundamentally connected.

The Japanese economy deviates from the prevalent marginalist logic and outcomes in the United States in several fascinating and distinctive ways. For example, employers tend to follow a *nenko-joretsu* system, where wages are indexed in part to the age of the employee regardless of performance and experience. While some economists think this system may be declining, historical wage analysis is conclusive that this practice was at least historically a prominent factor in determining wage in Japan. Though Japanese economists argue that the *nenko* system is defensible on economic grounds, it is not defensible on marginalist grounds,<sup>4</sup> as wage increases by age often are not proportionate to productivity increases. To point to another deviation from marginalist expectations, when costs exceed marginal product during times of recession or during changes in consumer preferences, Japanese cultural tendencies to see employment or subcontracting agreements as obligations which goodwill compels firms to sustain result in increased diversification by redirecting employees to new projects and divisions rather than in layoffs.<sup>5</sup> Here again, the actions of Japanese firms do not correspond to the neoclassical model in a manner that causes Japanese firms to stand out significantly from many of their European and North American counterparts.

How is it that Japan does not conform in significant ways to models that are the basis of economic knowledge of the labor market in other nations? And how does Japan's nonconformity relate to the question of how theology can contribute to counter-

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<sup>4</sup> Toshiaki Tachibanaki, *Wage Determination and Distribution in Japan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 45-9.

<sup>5</sup> Ronald Dore, "Goodwill and the Spirit of Market Capitalism," *British Journal of Sociology* 34.4 (Dec. 1983): 459-482.

formations of the market that may better cooperate with the work of God in the economy? These questions will serve as the starting point for this chapter's analysis of identity. If a social imaginary can shape an economic agent's experience of the world in ways that may more or less conform with the Father's work in general revelation, then the identity of economic agents can establish which roles within the world so experienced are possible for the agent, and certain identities will conform to our received identity in Christ better than others. To begin to explain how this is the case, I must first attend to the example of marginalist theory and labor markets in Japan in greater depth.

### **Marginalist Analysis in Labor Markets: A Case Study**

American economist John Bates Clark is responsible for introducing the marginalist revolution into economic analysis of the firm.<sup>6</sup> Classical economics derived the value of goods from the quantity of labor required to produce such goods,<sup>7</sup> but the marginalist revolution simultaneously instituted by Léon Walras, William Stanley Jevons, and Carl Menger proposed a new explanation for how values were determined. According to marginalist models, each incremental purchase of a good has a corresponding reduction in marginal utility, the utility gained by consuming this additional unit. At a certain level the marginal utility for additional consumption will not be worth the marginal cost of purchasing another unit, and the buyer will purchase no more of the specific good. The insight was originally applied to supply and demand of goods in an attempt to explain how markets clear (where marginal utility meets marginal

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<sup>6</sup> For a summary of Clark's work in this respect, see E. K. Hunt, *History of Economic Thought: A Critical Perspective*, second edition (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 302-307.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, David Ricardo, *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1911), 5-11.

cost at an equilibrium price point). Clark's contribution was to apply the same marginalist logic to different variables in labor markets to propose how equilibrium is met.

Clark's stated purpose in applying marginalism to questions of wealth distribution in a firm was to "show that the distribution of the income of society is controlled by a natural law."<sup>8</sup> Clark believes that economic natural laws depend upon "voluntary action of men [sic]" but that it is possible to "predict" certain actions "under given circumstances."<sup>9</sup> Such predictions, based on what he sees as an accurate anthropological understanding, allow the scientific economist to understand how an economy functions and to identify when markets are rightly operating according to these natural laws and when they are impeded by a certain friction that an economist can then seek to minimize. The laws themselves are "static," "universal," "deep acting" and "beyond control."<sup>10</sup>

In this specific instance, Clark identifies a set of laws that allow him to apply marginalist insights to the firm. First, marginal units of capital "grow less and less productive."<sup>11</sup> If a business purchases its first computer, for example, it may grow much more productive. A second computer will allow two employees to work online at once, again increasing productivity but less than was the case with the first computer. By the time a small firm with ten employees adds an eleventh computer, increases in productivity will likely be quite small. Similarly, Clark posits that there is "diminishing productivity of labor," where each new employee increases the output of a business in

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<sup>8</sup> John Bates Clark, *The Distribution of Wealth: A Theory of Wages, Interest, and Profits* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1925), v.

<sup>9</sup> John B. Clark, *Philosophy of Wealth: Economic Principles Newly Formulated* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1892), 32.

<sup>10</sup> Clark, *Distribution*, 36-7, 39, 2, 6.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

decreasing degrees.<sup>12</sup> When perfect competition is assumed, “wages conform to the product that is attributable to marginal labor”<sup>13</sup> where marginal product is established by appeal to a “zone of indifference” where marginal laborers add little to production capabilities to justify their hiring.<sup>14</sup>

Like the models discussed in chapter 4, this model faces theoretical and empirical difficulties that question its status as fact. On a theoretical level, Clark assumes that perfect competition eliminates profits for the entrepreneurs that coordinate capital and labor to establish the proper marginal quantity.<sup>15</sup> This means that distribution of revenue can be perfectly divided between wages, rent, and investment without the need to consider the question of distribution of revenue between profits and wages. In the real economy entrepreneurs are driven by profit, undermining this assumption and raising the new ethical question of what proportion of earnings should go to entrepreneurs and what proportion to labor. A much larger problem is found in the fact that neoclassical economic theory has never been able to successfully show how markets clear, so major components of Clark’s theory cannot, strictly speaking, be related to equilibrium in labor markets.<sup>16</sup> Even worse on a theoretical level is the fact that Clark tries to identify marginal product of labor and capital independently, but as John Médaille notes “neither capital nor labor produces anything without the other.”<sup>17</sup> A machine without a laborer produces no cars, just as laborers without machines could not produce many of the products fundamental to a modern economy. Even if the marginal products of labor and

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 105-106.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>16</sup> Hunt, *History of Economic Thought*, 306-7.

<sup>17</sup> Médaille, *Truly Free Market*, 130.



capital could be clearly and independently determined, capital and labor may not be substitutable such that marginal costs and demand curves may not explain existing wage rates.<sup>18</sup> Empirically, Clark's theory is also contestable. Labor productivity has grown over the last half century, but real wages for labor have remained stagnant, suggesting that wages are not linked to marginal product.<sup>19</sup> Clark's "natural law" of wages simply is not a fact, nor is it the result of a purely positive economics.

Despite its theoretical and empirical weaknesses, Clark's position became standard in neoclassical economics, the basic model that guided the construction of labor markets for most of the twentieth century and that reinforced a particular social imaginary. For example, Clark's marginalist theory has played a significant normative role in economic policy debates over minimum wage legislation. Economists often use marginalist logic to argue as Thomas Sowell does that "making it illegal to pay less than a given amount does not make a worker's productivity worth that amount – and, if it is not, that worker is unlikely to be employed."<sup>20</sup> Christian economists, theologians, and philosophers frequently point to neoclassical marginalist theory to argue that increasing a minimum wage would by economic laws result in layoffs as wage rates would surpass marginal product of labor.<sup>21</sup> Such arguments depend upon a certain social imaginary that

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<sup>18</sup> Schlefer, *Assumptions*, 55.

<sup>19</sup> Médaille, *Truly Free Market*, 129; Congressional Budget Office, "Trends in the Distribution of Household Income Between 1979 and 2007," in Ruth D. Alford and Rod Reilly, eds., *Income Inequality: An Alarming U.S. Trend* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2012), 4-5.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Sowell, *Basic Economics*, third edition (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 211.

<sup>21</sup> So Samuel Gregg appeals to marginalist theory when he argues that the "normative principle" of a living wage should not "be imposed in defiance of market conditions." Samuel Gregg, *Economic Thinking for the Theologically Minded* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001), 109-112. Similarly, Victor Claar and Robin Klay describe the market mechanism whereby equilibrium prices are reached, and then conclude that "the terrible irony of all minimum-wage laws is that they hurt the very people who are most disadvantaged, for example teens and minority workers," by causing companies to hire fewer workers due to the increased

envision the economy as a rigid and inviolable set of laws not susceptible to ethical analysis,<sup>22</sup> that legitimizes jobs that do not supply a living wage on the grounds that such jobs are entry level jobs intended for teens, students, and part time labor,<sup>23</sup> and that assumes executive officers are worth exorbitant salaries that should not and cannot be reduced in the event that living wage legislation raises total labor costs for a firm.<sup>24</sup> On a policy level, at least, Clark's model is performative: what he claims as fact contains a normative core that shapes the construction of markets.

Though performative, Clark's economic model is not an example of what MacKenzie would call Barnesian performativity (as discussed in chapter 4) due to the fact that some economists do not find that small increases in minimum wage legislation result in a corresponding rise in unemployment.<sup>25</sup> The market has not fully conformed to Clark's predictions. Insofar as Clark's theory does still depend upon certain contingent circumstances that lead an economy to converge on his economic predictions, Barnesian performativity can be resisted in a certain fashion, as is evident in the above example of

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costs. Here again, the economic principle is treated as the inevitable outcome of *all* possible pieces of legislation, a scientific fact that constrains or negates moral obligation. Victor V. Claar and Robin J. Klay, *Economics in Christian Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 175. cf. Richards, *Money, Greed, and God*, 38-9.

<sup>22</sup> The point is often explicitly made. See Woods, *The Church and the Market*, 213; Brand and Pratt, *Seeking*, 837.

<sup>23</sup> Richards notes, minimum wage laws are "entry level jobs," so "few people stay in these jobs forever." Therefore, claims Richards, the low wage should not be treated as seriously problematic. Richards, *Money, Greed, and God*, 38-9. What Richards does not offer, and this is significant, is any moral, theological or philosophical justification for allowing a family to fail to make a living wage today simply because they will likely make such a wage in five years. Richards assumes that this tradeoff is acceptable without argumentation, assuming a view of history as progress toward a better future, a vision of a world where the poor will gradually improve their lot through the natural development of the economy and their place in it. Hope is rooted in the economic development itself, which negates any moral action we may feel compelled to take today precisely because such action risks the growth of the economy in the future.

<sup>24</sup> See Sirico, *Defending the Free Market*, 104.

<sup>25</sup> For example, David Card and Alan B. Krueger, *Myth and Measurement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

Japan. Statistical data quite clearly shows that Japan is more prone to “labor hoarding,” where laborers are retained despite their productivity not warranting their wages. In such circumstances, economists are prone to speak in terms of “underutilized units of labor” that are retained by “risk averse” firms that fear the costs of retraining staff in the event that temporary declines in demand end and more labor is needed.<sup>26</sup> While this is certainly a possible explanation grounded in the best neoclassical theory, it is an explanation that does not consider the concrete manifestation of Japanese cultural values in the marketplace.

How is Japan really able to resist the sort of social imaginary linked with marginalist labor theory that has been a controlling factor of Western policy debates? Arguably, the decisive factor is found in Japanese conceptions of identity. As D. Stephen Long notes, marginalism only works by “abstracting” labor and capital into “equivalences” divorced from “the social and political conditions that make [economic exchanges] possible.”<sup>27</sup> In accordance with a de-personalizing social imaginary, the laborers analyzed in minimum wage debates are dissociated and abstracted from any particular identity markers and are treated as interchangeable contributors to a marginal product that can then be compared to a firm’s revenue in making hiring and wage decisions. In other words, a certain social imaginary results in certain forms of abstract logic possible. In Japan, identity markers are much more integral to the labor market. In the *nenko* system the identity of certain workers – specifically their ages – results in a

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<sup>26</sup> Robert A. Hart and Seiichi Kawasaki, *Work and Pay in Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 10-11. Hart and Kawasaki provide both statistical evidence and a typical neoclassical explanation for the phenomenon.

<sup>27</sup> Long, *Divine Economy*, 99.

higher salary determined independently from marginal productivity. Here respect for certain identities resists a social imaginary that views labor as abstracted and equivalent.

Japanese firms' tendency to diversify and move labor from one unit to another rather than resort to layoffs is also rooted in part in ideas of identity. Anthropologist Chie Nakane argues that in much of Europe and North America, workers are likely to sense themselves connected with other workers at an equivalent level in competing businesses, emphasizing classes of blue and white collar workers or labor and management, for example. In Japan, workers are more likely to identify themselves as parts of corporate groupings. Thus, a factory worker in Japan will feel more solidarity with the manager of her company than with fellow factory workers at a different company.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, in Japan unions are traditionally company based, rather than based on workers at the same job level in the same industry at various firms.<sup>29</sup> Through unions, members of a company at all levels of the corporate hierarchy are united in seeking optimal outcomes for all levels. Whereas the American cultural understanding may encourage management to view laborers as part of an out-group distinct from the managers, the Japanese cultural understanding equips management to view laborers as part of an in-group including both managers and laborers. In other words, there is a sort of "we consciousness" between management and labor in Japan. When management associates laborers with a shared identity, they are less likely to disregard the particular identities of workers and treat them as substitutable and abstract objects that can be eliminated to balance marginal costs

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<sup>28</sup> John Monaghan and Peter Just, *Social & Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 106. Fitting with the American tendency, Clark considers society in terms of "sub-groups" of laborers, investors, and entrepreneurs with disparate interests, rather than in terms of discrete firms that are associations of investors, laborers, and entrepreneurs with shared interests. Clark, *Distribution*, 55.

<sup>29</sup> Richard B. Freeman, "How Labor Fares in Advanced Economies," in *Working Under Different Rules*, ed. Richard B. Freeman (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1994), 16.

and marginal product of labor, and more likely to pursue creative strategies including restructuring to avoid the need to resort to layoffs.

Another interesting fact illuminating the Japanese ability to resist marginalist logic is found in the fact that many Japanese managers understand themselves to have a responsibility to improve their workers. This is part of what it means to be a manager. For example, Hiroshi Tanaka describes how Kihachiro Onitsuka, the founder and CEO of the Onitsuka Corporation, emphasized the development of his employees' abilities. Onitsuka saw these employees as "unpolished stones" who could become "gems," or "Onitsuka men."<sup>30</sup> Here again, we see identity coming into play. Onitsuka's self-understanding of the role of CEO led to particular investments in employees resulting in a common identity of "Onitsuka men," an identity which would resist the typical abstracting and instrumental logic of marginalism.

The Japanese tendency to defy marginalist expectations thus points toward the next important feature that is central to the development of a theological approach to economics: Identity. I have argued that economic models help to construct particular markets that are necessarily value-laden, and that participation in these markets inevitably shapes the social imaginary of an economic agent in ways that may undermine orthopathy by impeding that agent's ability to have communion with God. Insofar as such imaginaries are social, which is to say that one's imaginary is shared in significant ways with other people with whom that individual interacts, a social imaginary that undermines orthopathy ceases to conform to God's common grace. In such a situation the market as a whole is not contributing toward the formation of the elect for the reception of special

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<sup>30</sup> Hiroshi Tanaka, *Personality in Industry: The Human Side of a Japanese Enterprise* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012), 58-9. The terminology is taken from Onitsuka himself.

grace. Instead, the market is constructed such that special grace counteracts the formative influence of the market and nature is not properly oriented toward grace but stands in conflict with it.

In this chapter, I propose that the concept of identity is the created term through which orthodoxy, the second dimension of redemptively significant transformation, is either enabled or hindered. In other words, God works through the mental acts whereby a human being maintains self-understanding to bring about a transformation toward right knowledge. Identity allows an individual to select from numerous possible roles that can be played within a social imaginary, perhaps even identifying a role that rightly results in orthopraxic action. In order to explain how identity functions in such a manner, I must first explain in greater detail the role of a social imaginary in the formation of the self. Once the connection between a social imaginary and self-formation is clear, two problems must be addressed. First, I must identify a proper theological locus that correlates identity formation to an appropriated work of the Son. I will argue that the doctrine of justification serves as such a proper locus, but in so doing I will need to briefly address recent objections arising from the study of the New Testament. Second, I must explain how to connect identity as determined by justification with particular discussions among economists. In this instance, the problem will be particularly challenging given the shortcoming of most economic approaches to identity. I will therefore need to address this shortcoming and possible resolutions before I move to the final substantive component of the chapter – an analysis of how the dominant social imaginary associated with the most prevalent economic theories undermines elements of common grace oriented toward justification and communion with God. In short, in

various ways most markets are not sources of concurrent divine action toward communion with God because they tend toward depersonalization and abstraction rather than toward the sort of personalizing tendencies that allow human beings created in the image of God to commune with the God whose image they bear. But I am getting ahead of myself. Let us begin with the formative nature of social imaginaries.

### **Imaginaries and the Selves They Engender**

In chapter 4 I argued that markets are socially constructed insofar as a market is irreducible to a material reality. Instead, a market is an institutional fact, a peculiar form of fact that depends on a particular institution. In this instance, specific linguistic mental representations partially constitute the market as do the material realities that serve as the signs of these linguistic meanings. So, for example, a stock market consists of material realities such as a trading floor, traders, stock certificates, and various computers and other technologies. However, these realities only function as a stock market when stock certificates are collectively understood to count as partial shares of a corporation (itself an institutional fact) that can legitimately be exchanged among traders who have the specific role of facilitating such transactions in a trading floor recognized as a valid space within which such transactions occur. Because markets are institutional facts partly constituted by linguistic signifiers, I suggested that markets and the models that are used to design them can be particularly influential in transmitting or shaping a social imaginary.

The picture up to this point is accurate, but it is also incomplete and must be augmented by a more thorough account of how social imaginaries function. Searle argues

that social realities “are in fact just placeholders for patterns of *activities*.”<sup>31</sup> To return to the example of money, money is a social reality that serves as a placeholder for several patterns of activities such as exchanging goods or storing valuables. As a medium of exchange money provides us with the continued possibility of exchanging with others without need of direct barter, but on some level the money is itself a placeholder for such barter, an equivalent and substitute for such actions. Specific actions that social realities serve as a placeholder for are possible partly because of constitutive rules determinative of the social fact,<sup>32</sup> and partly as a result of what Searle terms “the Background”, or “the set of nonintentional or preintentional capacities that enable institutional states of function.”<sup>33</sup> Money can partly serve as a medium of exchange because it is collectively recognized to function as such under certain specified conditions, but also partly because human beings have the preintentional capacities needed for such functions to arise. Searle suggests that such capacities include, among other things, the ability to perceive something as a certain category of thing, the ability to form experiences into a certain narrative with “dramatic shape” complete with its own set of desires and expectations, the tendency to pursue specific actions according to certain motivations, and the disposition toward certain behaviors in certain contexts.<sup>34</sup> In short, we might say that the Background allows a person to relate to the world in a certain way. To return to the example of money, Searle argues that persons who use money “have developed a set of dispositions that are sensitive and responsive to the specific content of those rules” that are

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<sup>31</sup> Searle, *Construction*, 57. The emphasis is Searle’s.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 132-7.



constitutive of an institutional fact like money.<sup>35</sup> A certain Background develops within a subject that enables money to be used without need of intentional reflection.<sup>36</sup> What I want to suggest (for Searle is not as clear on the matter) is that in the development of a certain set of dispositions, a certain Background, a person is not only enabled to relate to the world in a certain sort of way, but more importantly *as a certain sort of person*.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, a person's development as a certain sort of person is in many respects determined by the identity that person possesses within a given imaginary.

Three propositions about the relationship between Background capacities and social reality allow us to recognize the theological significance of a social imaginary as related to identity. First, there are various different Background capacities that social facts can depend upon. Money requires Background capacities that allow consumers to determine the value of goods in equivalent increments and to recognize a socially constructed reality as capable of holding value that can be used in the exchange of said goods. Such capacities are entirely unnecessary to sustain an unrelated institutional fact, such as recognition of the social fact that a particular individual counts as president of the United States of America. Second, Background capacities are variable in nature and can therefore be developed. This follows from the fact that recognition of an institutional fact is a learned skill. Consider again the example of money. A child does not automatically understand that a particular piece of paper counts as money; such knowledge must be

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> It should be noted here that the way that Searle describes the Background is in certain respects similar to the way that Kevin Hector, drawing on Schleiermacher, describes Gefühl. It is in fact impossible to fully distinguish the pre-reflective or nonintentional substrata of norms, of the social imaginary, and of identity. Here the reader should keep in mind that I am presenting the immanent structure of the same undivided divine act in a manner that allows for appropriation of three distinct yet undivided aspects of that structure to Father, Son, and Spirit as an appropriate basis for divine-human communion.

learned. However, having learned this knowledge, the capacity to evaluate goods by assigning a price expressed in terms of money based on such learned knowledge is something that can develop with practice. A child cannot initially estimate the value of a good with any accuracy and is unlikely to consider a good in terms of price. By the time that child is an adult, she will be able to almost instantly estimate the price of a wide range of goods with increasing accuracy. This depends upon the development of a particular Background capacity. Third, when an enduring social fact depends upon a certain set of Background capacities, those capacities are the ones that will develop. The theological implications of these three propositions are staggering: the particular institutional facts that partly constitute our social imaginary by determining the ways that we understand the social world, the interactions that occur within that social world, and the institutional symbols that undergird such a social world have a fundamental and formative influence on the human subject.<sup>38</sup> Our development as persons is directed partly by the imaginaries we inhabit.

While markets can allow for a number of varieties of personal development, much of the contemporary economy is more inclined to hinder personal development in any form. “Conventional economics tends to reduce the human being from person to object,” argues Edward O’Boyle, presenting the most important of the common themes explored in personalist economics. For O’Boyle, this claim derives from the fact that many economic theories treat workers as mere “inputs.”<sup>39</sup> Though this insight does gesture toward the formative nature of economic models, O’Boyle still focuses on the macroeconomic question of which economic system is valid, suggesting that the main

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<sup>38</sup> I am here alluding to Taylor’s definition of the social imaginary discussed in chapter 3. Taylor, *Imaginaries*, 23.

<sup>39</sup> O’Boyle, *Personalist Economics*, 10.

problem with “unrestrained capitalism” is continual risk of “economic anarchy” arising from a “dysfunctioning market.”<sup>40</sup> Personalist concerns rightly identify a major problem in contemporary markets, but the typical personalist explanation lacks adequate scope. The full truth of O’Boyle’s claim is only clear when we consider the ramifications of the formative role of social imaginaries discussed above, and for this we need an even more theologically nuanced account than personalists offer.

Luigino Bruni is particularly helpful in connecting the potentially depersonalizing nature of markets to our current discussion of the social imaginary. Bruni begins with the claim that social life and interaction is fundamentally a blessing that more than compensates for the wounds often received in interpersonal interaction. Here Bruni illustrates with the example of Jacob, who received the blessing of becoming Israel only by wrestling with a figure who wounded his hip (Gen. 32:22-32).<sup>41</sup> Bruni elaborates on his understanding of the fullness of humanity by considering three kinds of love: *eros*, *philia*, and *agape*.<sup>42</sup> *Eros* is fundamentally self-oriented: “The center of the erotic relationship is I, not Thou.”<sup>43</sup> *Philia*, on the other hand, does consider the other, but often in the general sense of the “common good.” Here the other is not particular, but rather abstract.<sup>44</sup> Only *agape* is a love that is so oriented toward a concrete other that its fulfillment depends upon the other. *Agape* therefore necessarily opens us up to the

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>41</sup> Luigino Bruni, *The Wound and the Blessing: Economics, Relationships, and Happiness*, trans. N. Michael Brennen (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2012), 8-9.

<sup>42</sup> I am well aware that there is not always a clear distinction in meaning in the use of such Greek vocabulary, particularly in the context of Biblical interpretation. However, for philosophical purposes, Bruni’s insights are quite helpful. On Biblical usage, see: D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, second edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), 31-2.

<sup>43</sup> Bruni, *The Wound and the Blessing*, 48.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 51.

possibility of being wounded by the other through rejection. As a result, “Gratuitousness is perhaps the word that best expresses the ambivalent nature of human relationships.”<sup>45</sup>

Trinitarian theology clearly supports Bruni’s understanding of personhood. The inherently gifted nature of personal existence is evident in the eternal life of the Trinity, where the eternal existence of the Son and the Spirit is in the form of an eternally communicated gift from the Father. While it is helpful to note this similarity, we ought not to place too much emphasis on the immanent Trinity as an illustration of the nature of personal existence for reasons outlined in chapter 2. The distinction between Creator and creature prohibits the immanent Trinity from functioning in any strong way as an exemplar of ideal human society – and included in the notion of the ideal society is an ideal representation of person in interpersonal relations. An analysis of the economic Trinity, on the other hand, yields ample material for revealing the fundamentally other-oriented and gifted nature of human personhood. This is particularly evident in the case of justification, where the identity received by Christians in justification finds its ground in and is oriented toward Christ the Other who in his perfect humanity gratuitously gave himself for the Church and who the Church is called to imitate in gratuitous self-giving toward the other. As illustrated so clearly in 1 John, if we keep the commandment of Christ, which is to love others, “walking in the same way which he walked,” then truly in us “the love of God is perfected” (2:5-6). This love that is perfected in us is the love perfectly embodied in the gratuitously accepted wound of Christ’s death for others (3:16). The love perfected in us is also the love by which we abide in God and God in us (3:24) as secured by the gift of the Holy Spirit (4:13). Such love should itself be seen as a love from God (4:10), the blessing by which we receive the identity that gives us “confidence

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 45.

for the day of judgment” (4:17) and eternal life in Christ (5:11). Truly, in what God has done for us in Christ, and in what we become through the Spirit in response to Christ’s work, we see the fullness of personhood as the gratuitous and other-oriented life of love that is grounded in the wounds which Christ’s resurrected body bears to this day.

Bruni believes that in the modern era thinkers like Thomas Hobbes and Adam Smith misguidedly sought to insulate the individual from the possibility of such wounds, establishing the Leviathan and the Market as mediators eliminating “direct intersubjectivity” and substituting “a mediated and anonymous relationality.”<sup>46</sup> “Abstract systems,” to borrow a term from Anthony Giddens, have therefore transformed personal relationships grounded in trust to impersonal connections.<sup>47</sup> Bruni does not believe that markets are therefore fundamentally flawed. Smith’s move was primarily motivated by a desire to avoid wounds inflicted by hierarchical relationships in society that were and are problematic.<sup>48</sup> The problem was that Smith supplemented this positive impulse with a desire to

emphasize the independence from the ‘benevolence of our fellow citizens’ as a positive virtue to the new form of sociality introduced by the market. Market relationships allow us to satisfy our needs without having to depend on others’ love; by all depending impersonally and anonymously on the ‘Invisible Hand’ of the Market (with a capital ‘M’), we do not personally depend on anyone else, nor do we have to encounter anyone personally (and potentially painfully).<sup>49</sup>

Bruni suggests that this problematic move away from *agape* was reinforced by a move toward instrumental logic, where the other no longer serves as an end, a person with

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>47</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 112-116. Giddens also helps us to expand our scope by noting that while international and even larger local markets can contribute to this depersonalizing tendency, but other factors like technological change and the erosion of certain community institutions are also a factor.

<sup>48</sup> Bruni, *The Wound and the Blessing*, 18.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 15.

whom a relationship can result in wound or blessing. Instead the other is merely a means to the end of benefiting the self.<sup>50</sup> This is the “logic of prices and costs applied to human relationships,”<sup>51</sup> and I would argue that the mathematical nature of models in post-Smithian economic theory has only exacerbated the problem by abstracting persons from their unique historical context by representing them through intersubstitutable variables and by instrumentalizing them in deploying these variables in models oriented toward ends other than human interpersonal communion. To reiterate the claims of personalist economists, the person has become the individual,<sup>52</sup> defined not by relation but by isolation, not by an unmediated and gratuitous I-Thou relationship, but by I-It instrumental logic devoid of personal presence.<sup>53</sup>

Bruni’s analysis of modern economic depersonalization is precisely what we see in the marginalist approach to wages discussed above. Especially in larger corporations, marginalist analysis abstracts labor from concrete intersubjective relations, considering labor in terms of the impersonal concept of marginal product of labor that treats all labor as intersubstitutable. The result of a social imaginary controlled by such symbols is a conceptuality dominated by distinctive economic classes: laborers are intersubstitutable but an elite class (Clark’s “entrepreneurs”) have the technical skills needed to direct the

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>52</sup> Eastern Orthodox theology, particularly in modern times, helpfully illuminates the personalist claim. Theologians like Lossky and Zizioulas see person as determinative of nature rather than the inverse, which to them means that each person is not constrained by a common nature and is not intersubstitutable but rather completely unique. While at certain points the basic narrative offered by Zizioulas in particular can be challenged, the fundamental distinction between individual and person bears much fruit. For a particularly helpful and concise rendition, see Aristotle Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 131-3.

<sup>53</sup> Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970), 62-3. Martin Buber writes that “the You encounters me by grace.” “The relation to the You is unmediated.” In contrast, the difference between You and It is the difference “between presence and object.”

corporation and are not intersubstitutable.<sup>54</sup> A social imaginary influenced by marginalist wage theory has also allowed the purported natural laws of the market to serve as a mediator between management and employees, weakening interpersonal obligations so that economic downturns or reduction in profits results in layoffs for intersubstitutable laborers with increasing frequency vis-à-vis reductions in wage across the board, profit cuts, or restructuring corporate divisions.<sup>55</sup>

This phenomenon is not only evident in the labor market, but more generally in neoclassical economic theory.<sup>56</sup> As economist Harold Demsetz notes, the much-maligned notion of the *homo economicus* was designed to respond to the “puzzle” of the “spontaneous” nature of the market.<sup>57</sup> In other words, the *homo economicus* is already embedded in a social imaginary that sees the market as a natural reality that is discovered, not an artificial reality that is constructed. Demsetz notes that *homo economicus* is

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<sup>54</sup> In contrast to my position, Jung Mo Sung claims that capitalist legitimation depends on seeing unsatisfied desires/needs as personal failures, but class-based analysis undermines this. I disagree in a qualified sense insofar as the forms of labor analysis associated with marginalism that I have discussed in this chapter use a conception of workers as part of a different class, an other who is part of an intersubstitutable class of others, to allow for instrumental logic that depersonalizes workers for marginal analysis. Despite my disagreement here, I suspect Sung may be on track insofar as in “class analysis” of a Marxist orientation, unsatisfied needs are a result of class dynamics, but in certain capitalist imaginaries personal failures result in one’s membership to a particular class. I would simply suggest that class is a factor in both imaginaries. See Sung, *Desire*, 41-2.

<sup>55</sup> See the helpful history of this development in Louis Uchitelle, *The Disposable American: Layoffs and Their Consequences* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006).

<sup>56</sup> Though I will focus on economic theory and emphasize the particular case study of labor economics, the same point can be reached from other directions. Using sociological analysis and starting with the goods market instead of the labor market, Vincent Miller makes a strong case for the fact that consumerism inculcates an ever increasing demand for exchangeable goods, but that these goods are abstracted and made equivalent and exchangeable such that there is a “great hollowing out.” Though expressed in different form, his conclusions reinforce my own argument about how a potential market-derived social imaginary results in abstraction and intersubstitutability. When a similar tendency is applied to persons, the result is depersonalization. Vincent Miller, *Consuming*, 77.

<sup>57</sup> Harold Demsetz, *From Economic Man to Economic System: Essays on Human Behavior and the Institutions of Capitalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 9-10.

thought to describe agents who participate in “exchanges between persons who are essentially unknown to each other” as contrasted with relations in the home where “personalized interactions” are “borne of durable associations.”<sup>58</sup> Admitting that markets result in different “codes of behavior in dealings with people,” particularly in the logic of “business is business,” Demsetz reveals how a particular imaginary results in particular set of actions guided by a particular set of norms, though he does not use the terminology I have deployed.<sup>59</sup> He is also clear that the social imaginary and associated norms of action deriving from the *homo economicus* requires that,

Institutional mechanisms are put into place to make people comfortable dealing with strangers. It is true that these mechanisms distinguish people, particularly by separating those who do qualify to trade from those who do not. A degree of personalization, then, is present in exchange activities, but it is not a great deal of personalization, nor is it of a sort that creates charitable or angry feelings between those on the opposite side of an exchange.<sup>60</sup>

In short, “institutional mechanisms” like stock market membership requirements as a prerequisite to trading<sup>61</sup> are one aspect of market construction, and a particular social imaginary and a particular understanding of the human being facilitating a particular set of norms are reinforced by any such “institutional mechanisms.”

How, then, do we explain the example of the Japanese labor system that violates marginalist expectations? In large part, Japan was historically able to resist depersonalization through a robust notion of identity that helps to orient economic

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>61</sup> For example, in the New York Stock Exchange, only members can trade stocks on the exchange floor. Such membership is restricted to those who can financially afford purchase of a seat at the exchange, who meet the legal “age of majority” to be able to legally conduct such business, and who are sponsored by two existing seat holders. Combined, such regulations attempt to ensure that members of the exchange are reliable and trustworthy, albeit at times virtually anonymous to those customers who trade through larger brokerages. See Richard J. Teweles and Edward S. Bradley, *The Stock Market*, seventh edition (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998), 133-42.



interactions toward a different *telos*. As suggested in chapter 3, identity can be a powerful means of resisting cross pressures between a social imaginary and certain societal norms that may contradict. A social imaginary allows for a certain set of actions to be possible. This is evident in the way that institutional facts serve as placeholders for particular forms of action, though such institutional facts certainly do not exhaustively describe the role of a social imaginary in establishing particular trajectories of actions. In the case of Japan, a social imaginary influenced by certain economic understandings of labor, the market, *homo economicus*, and wages as determined by marginal product conflicted with an older culturally influenced social imaginary that envisioned labor, human beings, wages, and the market in a different fashion. In the context of two conflicting imaginaries, two contradictory symbolic thought worlds, particular identity markers in Japan allowed the Japanese labor market to resist the marginalist influenced imaginary. Notions of competing classes of workers and management were resisted by identities grounded in the corporations that employed both workers and management, resisting trends in management to view labor as outsiders. Identity markers such as age in the *nenko-joretsu* system were seen to create obligations that prevented managers from seeing labor as abstract and depersonalized. Japanese managers also had a self-understanding of their role in management as rooted in obligation toward their employees, such that employees could not simply be laid off during a downturn but should be creatively retained through corporate restructuring. In each of these instances, identity played a major role in resisting one of several available social imaginaries.

It would be helpful to clarify what I mean in using the word “identity.” Identity is grounded in being, meaning that identity cannot be completely detached from the ontic

core of the individual.<sup>62</sup> One cannot simply self-identify as a toaster without a degree of cognitive dissonance with reality that renders successful interaction with the world impossible. However identity is also constructed in part through interlocation with others. As Taylor notes, “A self exists only within... ‘webs of interlocation.’”<sup>63</sup> Simply put, identity is self-understanding rooted in an ontic core and developed partially through interpersonal interlocation. To fully understand identity, we also need to understand how identity functions. A social imaginary that provides a set of possible trajectories of action also allows for a set of possible commitments which may render certain actions acceptable or unacceptable. Identity is the set of particular “commitments” from which a person determines her “particular standpoint” from which she “can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose.”<sup>64</sup> A full understanding of identity, then, can be summarized as follows: Identity is self-understanding rooted in an ontic core and developed partially through interpersonal interlocation that allows a person to assume a particular standpoint from which certain trajectories of action and certain moral evaluations become possible.<sup>65</sup>

If identity serves as a basis for determining which courses of action and which moral evaluations are possible, then identity is critical to the coherent being-in-the-world. However, as noted in chapter 3, in late modernity there is a widespread loss of identity as a means of navigating being-in-the-world; identity insufficiently functions to anchor

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<sup>62</sup> Rommen, *Get Real*, 57.

<sup>63</sup> Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 36. See also Rommen, *Get Real*, 67-8.

<sup>64</sup> Taylor, *Sources*, 27, 29.

<sup>65</sup> Note that I am simplifying in certain respects Edward Rommen’s analysis insofar as I am treating self-understanding as a component of identity (though I doubt that such self-understanding is exhausted by identity), while Rommen tends to fully distinguish identity and what he calls self-awareness. For an example of Rommen’s understanding, see *Get Real*, 57.

one's relationship to the frameworks of reality as interpreted through a social imaginary and manifest in relationships with other persons in a particular standpoint. Instead, late modernity is characterized by what Rommen calls "expeditious associations," which are "transitory commitments in which what is important is some semblance of utility within a given arena of action."<sup>66</sup> These associations are partly a result of the shifts in economics discussed by Bruni, where the market serves as a mediator that eliminates the interpersonal interaction that would be rooted in identity – a mediation Rommen would call a reliance on "abstract systems" where identification of self and others is trivialized.<sup>67</sup> I have argued that markets constructed according to certain models that eliminate identity as a significant factor in economic interactions have contributed to this trivialization of identity, and the duration of this chapter will focus on this problem and on theological resources for a solution. However, it should be noted that a number of other factors have contributed to this destabilization of identity. Fluid labor markets facilitating changes in jobs, place of residence, and so forth hinder the development of stable identity markers, a problem enhanced by increasingly prevalent corporate mergers and restructurings.<sup>68</sup> In a world where job stability is on the decline,<sup>69</sup> vocation no longer

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 60. Rommen admits he is indebted in his thought here to Giddens, *Consequences of Modernity*, 88. Giddens speaks of a "trust in systems" that is prevalent in modern society and which depends upon "faceless commitments."

<sup>67</sup> Rommen, *Get Real*, 61-2, 73.

<sup>68</sup> Richard Sennett, "Street and Office: Two Sources of Identity," in *On the Edge: Living with Global Capitalism*, eds. Will Hutton and Anthony Giddens (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000), 176-184.

<sup>69</sup> A number of economic studies reached a near consensus that job stability and security has been weakening since the 1990s. By the 2000s, the evidence is quite strong, though there are lingering questions about the cause. Layoffs appear to make a minimal contribution, while offered buyouts of contracts and/or short-term job contracts may have greater explanatory power. See David Neumark, "Changes in Job Stability and Job Security: A Collective Effort to Untangle, Reconcile, and Interpret the Evidence," *National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 7472* (January 2000); Henry S. Farber, "Job Loss and the Decline in Job Security in the United

serves as a stable identity marker. In the face of a decline in traditional identity markers, advertising uses what Vincent Miller calls “misdirection” to associate certain goods and services with certain identities, but such an understanding shifts the ontic base of identity from the *imago Dei* to external material goods, creating a certain artificiality to identity, particularly as certain goods over time cease to convey the status that they once did.<sup>70</sup>

One could easily also point to the influence of technology, a decline in certain civic institutions, and the manner in which globalization undermines local markets, but all such factors are outside of the scope of the present study.

A destabilization or trivialization of identity is particularly problematic given that identity orients a person toward certain trajectories of agency which are only intelligible within a social imaginary and which are also dependent upon certain Background capacities.<sup>71</sup> Each identity results in a particular standpoint or set of commitments that ensure that certain Background capacities are developed, while others are not. A de-centering of identity therefore may undermine any consistent development of associated Background capacities. This may mean that sets of capacities develop which are not reconcilable into a coherent identity, in which case fragmentation of identity occurs and an agent can act according to certain commitments in one setting, like the workplace, and another set of commitments in a different context, like the home, without any coherence between the two identities or roles. A complete lack of development of pertinent Background capacities can result in what may be called a “loss of self,” the inability to

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States,” in *Labor in the New Economy*, eds. Katharine G. Abraham, James R. Spletzer, and Michael J. Harper (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 223-262.

<sup>70</sup> Vincent Miller, *Consuming*, 119. cf. Rommen, *Get Real*, 74.

<sup>71</sup> “Identity is ultimately legitimated by placing it within the context of a symbolic universe.” Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 100.

function adequately in any social setting, often accompanied by extreme anxiety.<sup>72</sup> More significant than either of these problems is the fact that both fragmentation of identity and loss of identity can undermine development in theological virtue by dismantling the immanent term of God's concurrent gracious work in sanctification. To fully understand why this is the case, we must turn to the doctrine of justification, a necessary prerequisite for sanctification.

### **Justification in Christ, Identity of Christ**

Daniel Bell argues that “the capitalist economy of desire is a manifestation of sin because it both corrupts desire and obstructs communion.”<sup>73</sup> Bell's charge of the corruption of desire relates to chapter 4 – certain capitalist social imaginaries can orient our desires in directions that do not allow us to see a world in which desire is only perfectly fulfilled through communion with God. However, to fully assess Bell's claim we must consider identity and the question of justification, for justification is that which restores communion with God. An analysis of the doctrine of justification will lead to the conclusion that Bell rightly identifies a problem, though he fails to explore whether markets can be constructed so that they may overcome this problem. In a market economy where identity can play a central role in economic exchanges, the identity received in justification may allow for theologically acceptable market interactions, provided that the right sorts of markets are constructed.

Paul's understanding of justification has been the topic of heated debate in recent Pauline scholarship, where advocates of a “new perspective” – perhaps we might more properly speak of new perspectives given the disagreements among scholars writing from

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<sup>72</sup> Rommen, *Get Real*, 72-3.

<sup>73</sup> Bell, *Economy*, 8.

this standpoint – tend to restructure the relationship between justification, Judaism, and the law from the way these topics are typically related by the so called “old perspective” or “Lutheran perspective.”<sup>74</sup> Certainly there are significant disagreements among scholars concerning the extent to which Paul retained certain Jewish understandings of the covenant, the relationship between union with Christ and justification in Paul, and the individual or corporate nature of justification. Though these disagreements are significant, I intend to appeal to aspects of the doctrine of justification grounded in a claim where there is surprising consensus: the justification made possible through Christ is one that provides the believer with an entirely new identity.<sup>75</sup>

Justification as a basis of new identity is evident throughout the writings of Paul. A brief survey of Galatians will make the point evident, and my subsequent systematic development of certain Pauline themes will clarify the matter even further. Paul writes his letter to the Galatians because he is concerned that they are accepting another gospel (1:6-7). He focuses on his relationship with Peter, emphasizing that Peter had endorsed his ministry and his understanding of the gospel (2:6-10). Peter, however, failed to

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<sup>74</sup> See especially the discussions in James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul: Collected Essays* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005); D.A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, eds. *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Paradoxes of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004); N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, book 2 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 774-1042. Stephen Westerholm offers a brief introduction to the key players, and a response from the old or Lutheran perspective. Stephen Westerholm, *Justification Reconsidered: Rethinking a Pauline Theme* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2013).

<sup>75</sup> The main exception to this unity is Douglas Campbell, who attempts to eschew almost the entirety of traditional understandings of justification. See Douglas A. Campbell, *The Deliverance of God: An Apocalyptic Rereading of Justification in Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: 2009). Campbell’s reading may be challenged as unnecessarily dividing the categories of justification and participation and favoring the latter, and thus it is only a valid critique (at best) of justification theories that divide the two and privilege the former. My approach will seek to unite the two, and thus is not clearly the object of Campbell’s objections. Arguably, Campbell’s approach ultimately fails because of the artificial antinomy he constructs. See R. Barry Matlock, “Zeal for Paul but not According to Knowledge: Douglas Campbell’s War on ‘Justification Theory,’” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 34.2 (December 2011): 115-149.

recognize the full ramifications of the gospel, withdrawing from the Gentiles he had eaten with in Antioch when a group came from James to visit the community. Paul rebuked Peter for failing to recognize the full ramifications of the gospel – “a person is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ” (2:16). As N. T. Wright puts the matter, “Something has happened to Peter – something so profound that he now has a new identity, which affects key behavior patterns and taboos about that very central human activity, sitting down to a meal.”<sup>76</sup> James D.G. Dunn reaches similar conclusions: “faith in Jesus Christ becomes the primary identity marker which renders the others superfluous.”<sup>77</sup> But Peter has failed to recognize the new identity he has received through justification, a claim Paul builds upon to make one of his strongest claims about the new identity found in Christ. So he writes in Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” Grant Macaskill notes that this is “an absolute transformation of identity: Paul sees his own life as now constituted by the presence of Christ within him.”<sup>78</sup> Justification is inseparably linked with such a transformation grounded in the reception of a new identity, though justification is not exhausted by the notion of transformation.<sup>79</sup> The ultimate outcome of this new identity is

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<sup>76</sup> Tom Wright, *Justification: God’s Plan and Paul’s Vision* (London: SPCK, 2009), 95.

<sup>77</sup> Dunn, *New Perspective*, 103. The “old” or “Lutheran” perspective would disagree with the “new perspective” on the nature of this identity by expanding identity beyond certain Jewish ritual markers. Despite this disagreement, many in the “Lutheran” perspective do affirm that justification entails the reception of a new identity. So, for example, Douglas Moo writes, “It is through Paul’s identification with Christ in his death that he has ‘died to the law’ and is now able to live for God.” Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 170.

<sup>78</sup> Grant Macaskill, *Union with Christ in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 221.

<sup>79</sup> Note how N. T. Wright reads Galatians 2:20: “Here, in what may be Paul’s earliest letter, and certainly his earliest extant exposition of ‘justification’, there should be no doubt: the primary meaning is ‘covenantal’, containing with it hints of ‘anthropology’ and of ‘forensic’ meanings but not reducible to those terms. As we have already seen, Paul effortlessly integrates this with the ‘incorporative’ theme (‘seeking to be justified in the Messiah’, verse 17) and also that of ‘transformation’ (‘I am, however, alive – but it isn’t me any longer, it’s the Messiah who

clear: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (3:19). Instead, believers have been “clothed” with Christ (3:27).<sup>80</sup> For this reason, Paul challenges Peter and disagrees with the Galatians’ reinterpretation of the gospel. Jesus alone is the basis of justification, and that justification entails a new identity that overcomes the old covenant-based distinction between Jew and Gentile.

I suggested above that identity is self-understanding rooted in an ontic core and developed partially through interpersonal interlocution that allows a person to assume a particular standpoint from which certain trajectories of action and certain moral evaluations become possible. Scripturally, we see these basic elements of identity in the doctrine of justification. The ontic core of identity is partly derived from the doctrine of creation: all human beings bear the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and part of justification involves “having clothed [ourselves] with the new self, which is being

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lives in me’, verse 20).” Wright, *Paul*, 971. Compare Wright’s “new perspective” with the “Lutheran” approach of Westerholm, who contrasts a life in which “Christ, in whose crucifixion they have shared, is now the effective force in their lives,” and here he cites Gal. 2:20, and the “old, untransformed life.” Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The ‘Lutheran’ Paul and His critics* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 374. Another advocate of the Lutheran perspective, Thomas Schreiner, objects to the notion of transformation because it does not fit with the basic forensic metaphor behind much scriptural talk about justification. “Righteous judges, for example, don’t *make* persons guilty or innocent” (160). Interestingly, Schreiner objects when N. T. Wright makes a similar argument that judges do not impute their righteousness to a defendant. Schreiner argues, “Wright falls into the mistake of limiting what Paul teaches because of the analogy he has used. Wright is correct in saying that judges don’t grant their righteousness to defendants. But Paul’s point is that the divine courtroom is radically different in some respects from a human courtroom!” (189). Schreiner is perfectly right, which invalidates his objection to the transformative nature of the forensic declaration of justification. In this regard, the divine courtroom is simply different than the human courtroom and does result in transformation. Thomas Schreiner, *Faith Alone: The Doctrine of Justification* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015).

<sup>80</sup> “The description in Gal 3:27 of those baptized into Christ being ‘clothed’ with him is reflective of the extent to which the believer’s identity is now defined by the personhood of Jesus. The statement is paired with a negation of other grounds of identity or status (‘there is no Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female’, 3:28) and with a declaration of unity in Christ (‘you are all one in Christ Jesus’).” Macaskill, *Union with Christ*, 196.



renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator” (Col. 3:10). In fact, the prevalent Biblical motif of the believer being “in Christ” partly points to unity with the one who is “the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15). One significant point should be clarified in terms of this ontic core. The new identity imputed to us in justification is not given *ex justitia propter relationem naturalem* – “on the account of a *natural relation*” such as the image of God. It is not by virtue of a human nature bearing the image of God that we receive the righteousness of Christ. Our justification is purely *ex mera gratia* – “of mere grace.”<sup>81</sup> Our righteousness is not one of our own, but one that comes from God (Phil. 3:9). However, the image of God does serve as an ontological basis for the possibility of our receiving the imputed righteousness of Christ because it is the ontological basis for God becoming human and completing the act of atonement that is the necessary condition of justification such that Jesus can be the “last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45), the federal head of a new covenant.

The formative influence that a social fact can have on Background capacities correlates in some respects to what theologians speak of in discussing the renewal of the image of God, so we must pause briefly to further clarify the ontic core of the identity received in justification. Simply put, the image of God is that mode of existence in which human beings manifest God in the world. This mode of existence whereby human beings manifest God in the world is a supernatural analogue for what happens in the development of Background capacities in the market in relation to model-influenced social facts. It is important to recall that economic models are a significant means by

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<sup>81</sup> The distinction is drawn from John Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith in The Works of John Owen*, vol. V, ed. William H. Goold (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 168-171. Owen is clear, and rightly so, that justification is an “imputation unto us of that which is not our own antecedently unto that imputation.”

which a social world and social facts are established and maintained. As I have argued more extensively elsewhere, the theological doctrine of the image of God functions similarly within theology as economic models do within much of economic theory. Both serve to (a) represent an ideal reality, in part by (b) gesturing to correct relations between actors. Both notions (c) allow for and track change and variation through time, and (d) substantial reflection on both can result in changes to social reality.<sup>82</sup> This underlying functional similarity between the image of God and economic models already warrants some consideration of the image in this context. If models can impact the development of subjectivity, then it may be that this development impacts renewal in the image of God through sanctification.

Further warrant for a connection between renewal in the image of God and the development of Background capabilities is provided by the fact that the way the Background is developed through model-influenced social reality correlates to traditional and contemporary theological accounts of the image of God. There is some consensus among Biblical scholars on several aspects of renewal in the image of God. The *imago Dei* refers in part to the way in which human beings “reflect” God into the world, as if an icon. This reflection is oriented toward a *telos*, meaning it is progressively developing toward a particular end.<sup>83</sup> This reflective and progressively developmental character connects the image of God with Background capacities, insofar as these capacities are in some sense constitutive of the human person (much like the divine image), and insofar as

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<sup>82</sup> D. Glenn Butner, Jr., “Transformative Models: Economic Modeling, Relational Ontology, and the Image of God,” *Journal of Markets and Morality*, 17.2 (Fall 2014), 355-379. Though I would modify the account that I offered in this article of how transformation occurs and how it relates to the Trinity, replacing it with the account offered in this text, I stand by the basic connection between the *imago dei* and economic models.

<sup>83</sup> Marc Cortez, *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2010), 16-17.

these capacities are also variable and capable of development in the context of particular social facts toward distinctive ends. In the New Testament the image is clearly Christological in nature. To grow in the image of God is also to be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29), and conformity to Christ is always a social process completed within the entire body of Christ. Thus, the image of God is decidedly social, and therefore in some sense akin to Background capacities that develop through social facts and realities. These concepts do not exhaust the notion of the image of God, but they do adequately point to the connection between the development of the image of God and the development of Background capacities, though the former should never be collapsed into the latter.

The basic exegetical elements of the image of God can be interpreted in philosophical terms, and here the thought of Christos Yannaras is quite helpful. Yannaras points to the “relative existential freedom” of human beings as opening up the possibility of relating to God and others or turning inward.<sup>84</sup> A turn toward relation “indicates a given goal setting, and consequently a definitive *mode of existence*.”<sup>85</sup> The goals one sets determine the mode of existence one’s life will take. To translate this into the terminology developed by Searle above, social facts are placeholders for certain patterns of activities. When someone relates to these facts, he develops the Background capacities needed in order to live an existence in which these activities are habitual. What Yannaras adds to the language deployed above is a recognition that this “goal setting” in relations depends upon another for fulfillment.<sup>86</sup> In the case of the image of God, in which a

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<sup>84</sup> Christos Yannaras, *Relational Ontology*, trans. Norman Russell (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2011), 15.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 48. The emphasis is Yannaras’s.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 19-20.

human being's mode of existence reflects God, this relation is a relation toward God. This relation is what I have called communion, and fulfillment of this relation is accompanied by development of a particular mode of existence, a Christoform representation of God in the world. Theologically, we can say that such conformity to Christ is made possible through justification and union with Christ, and in this conformity one becomes fully a person. The problem, however, is that strong depersonalizing forces in certain market constructions undermine this personalization through justification.

Returning to justification proper, it is clear that the state of being "in Christ" is the particular standpoint within which the identity given in justification is rooted.<sup>87</sup> This standpoint established through justification includes new identity markers with their related "filial rights,"<sup>88</sup> such as "the right to become children of God" (John 1:12), or adoption, and the right to be "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17), or the future glorification. Our being "in Christ" also entails living according to certain moral commitments and acting in a certain manner as enabled by the Holy Spirit.<sup>89</sup> If we are in Christ, and the Spirit is in us, then we are not to walk according to the sin nature but live according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-17). In our new identity as children of God, we should no longer be "conformed to the passions of [our] former ignorance" (1 Pet. 1:14).

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<sup>87</sup> This is helpfully summarized in: Julie Canlis, "Sonship, Identity and Transformation," in *Sanctification: Explorations in Theology and Practice*, ed. Kelly M. Kapic (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 232-250.

<sup>88</sup> I take the term from Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 513.

<sup>89</sup> "It has been widely acknowledged that Paul's ethic can be summarized as 'be what you are'; if you have been declared righteous, then be righteous in your conduct. This ethical structure means that ethical conduct arises out of grace-effected status. God decrees to sinners the status of being right with him, and so they are to live accordingly." Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 395.

It is also clear that the believer's identity in Christ is established through interlocution, as is most evident in Christ's appearance to Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). This encounter is paradigmatic of the experience of any Christian, for whom a particular kind of relationship, namely faith in Jesus, is the instrument by which justification occurs.<sup>90</sup> Alister McGrath puts the matter nicely: "Justification is about the transformation and fulfillment of our persons through an encounter with *the* Person who underlies personality itself."<sup>91</sup> Henri de Lubac makes a similar point, using language that emphasizes our unity with Christ: "we are fully persons only within the Person of the Son, by whom and with whom we share in the circumincession of the Trinity."<sup>92</sup> In evangelical and Reformed terms, this interlocutory aspect of justification is explored with the distinct concept of conversion, in both active and passive form. Louis Berkhof defines these two aspects of conversion as follows:

Active conversion is that act of God whereby He causes the regenerated sinner, in His conscious life, to turn to Him in repentance and faith. Passive conversion is the resulting conscious act of the regenerated sinner whereby he, through the grace of God, turns to God in repentance and faith.<sup>93</sup>

Recall from chapter 2 that communion flows from the union of the believer with Christ and consists of distinctive, conscious, personal relationships with Father, Son, and Spirit. Conversion is simply the conscious starting point of communion with God because conversion unto faith is instrumental in God imputing the alien righteousness of Christ that is the forensic basis for the restoration of such personal relationships.

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<sup>90</sup> The term "instrument" is here carefully selected to avoid an implication that God's "justifying act of grace" is relative. For faith recognizes the sovereignty of God, and recognizes itself as characterized by "emptiness," "vacuity," and "passiveness" even while being a truly human reality. G.C. Berkouwer, *Studies in Dogmatics: Faith and Justification*, trans. Lewis B. Smedes (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1954), 178.

<sup>91</sup> Alister McGrath, *Justification by Faith: What it Means for Us Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 113.

<sup>92</sup> De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 342.

<sup>93</sup> Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 483.

The issue of union with Christ has arisen in passing several times in discussing justification as the reception of a new imputed identity, and here it has also arisen as the basis for communion with the Triune God. It would be helpful at this point to clarify the relationship between union, sanctification and justification, three realities that are closely related in Reformed theology in differing ways throughout history. Early in the Reformation era, Martin Bucer's doctrine of a double justification consisting of a primary justification of imputation followed by a secondary justification distinguished between an initial imputation and a subsequent transformation. Bucer's proposal is marked by a lack in terminological clarity, and perhaps by moralistic overtones, something that Calvin corrected by distinguishing between justification and sanctification and rooting both in mystical union with Christ.<sup>94</sup> J. Todd Billings notes that for Calvin, justification and sanctification are a *duplex gratia*, "inseparable but distinguishable" realities.<sup>95</sup> Billings demonstrates that the more forensic language of justification is often accompanied by the participatory language of union and is never divided from the transformative gift of sanctification. In fact, there is broad consensus among the Reformed that union is the basis for justification.<sup>96</sup> So John Owen insists, in a manner representative of much of the

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<sup>94</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 221-225. We see a similar ambiguity in some early Reformed creeds. For example, the Tetrapolitan Confession treats justification as a "making godly." While this is not meant to entail that there can be a growth in justification, as sixteenth century Roman Catholic theologians were prone to claim, the terminology was too easily confused with such notions and was eventually replaced by a clearer distinction between justification and sanctification. Jan Rohls, *Reformed Confessions: Theology from Zurich to Barmen*, trans. John Hoffmeyer (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 130-132.

<sup>95</sup> J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 15. This inseparability and distinguishability is grounded in the doctrine of appropriations. Myk Habets, *The Anointed Son: A Trinitarian Spirit Christology*, (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 246.

<sup>96</sup> Against prevalent claims among recent neo-orthodox scholarship that Calvin was distinct from much of Reformed Orthodoxy in his emphasis on union with Christ, Richard Muller

Reformed tradition, “The foundation of the imputation asserted is union.”<sup>97</sup> We also see a clear distinction and yet indivisible unity between justification and sanctification. For example, William Ames claims the relational change between God and humans in salvation includes a relative and an absolute aspect. “The change, of course, has no degrees and is completed at one moment and in only one act. Yet in manifestation, consciousness, and effects, it has many degrees; therein lie justification and sanctification.”<sup>98</sup> As in Calvin, the forensic declaration of justification and the transformative outcome of sanctification cannot be divided, but are different aspects of the same reality of the imputed righteousness of Christ. And in all of the stages of the Reformed *ordo salutis*, the final goal is the possibility of communion with the Father through the Son by the power of the Spirit.<sup>99</sup>

Drawing on the historical Reformed claim that participatory union, imputation in justification, and transformation through sanctification are inseparable from one another yet irreducible to one another, I can now finish connecting the philosophical account of identity developed in this chapter with traditional Reformed theologies of justification. The “theological schematization” of the *ordo salutis*, to use Berkouwer’s terms, “has no significance by itself. The order is relevant only in that it aids us to appreciate the fullness

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surveys the theology of Calvin, Vermigli, Musculus, Beza, Zanchi, Ames, Perkins, Polanus, and others to demonstrate that treatment of union with Christ is largely uniform in its core components within the Reformed tradition. Muller concludes, “All the formations that we have examined identify union with Christ as the basis of the work of salvation.” Richard A. Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition: On the Work of Christ and the Order of Salvation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 239.

<sup>97</sup> Owen, *Justification*, 209.

<sup>98</sup> William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, trans. John D. Eusden (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1968), 161.

<sup>99</sup> Habets, *Anointed Son*, 248.

of divine salvation.”<sup>100</sup> The divine act of salvation applied to the believer through the work of Father, Son, and Spirit cannot be divided by a real distinction because the *opera dei ad extra indivisa sunt*. Therefore, we ought not be too worried about smaller differences in the *ordo salutis* among Reformed theologians. Instead, it is helpful to explore how the conceptual distinction between sanctification, union, and justification provides a theological precision that helps avoid a number of problematic theological positions. Reformed theologians distinguish between justification and sanctification and emphasize the priority of justification to emphasize *sola gratia* and *sola fides*. When sanctification is collapsed into justification, it is too easy to consider works constitutive of justification.<sup>101</sup> However, sanctification cannot be separated from justification without resulting in antinomianism.<sup>102</sup> Justification stands as the starting point of our transformation, and as transformation increases, so too does our union with Christ.<sup>103</sup> Here sanctification and union should be distinguished as a result of the distinctive missions of Son and Spirit. The Spirit is given to the Church to bring the transformative act of redemption to completion, while the Son became incarnate to accomplish what was necessary for redemption as the exemplary human sacrificed to atone for sin. As the exemplary perfect human, the Son gives concrete shape to the form that redemption when

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<sup>100</sup> Berkouwer, *Justification*, 27.

<sup>101</sup> John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 119.

<sup>102</sup> “This faith, however, you cannot apprehend without at the same time apprehending sanctification, for Christ ‘is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption’ (1 Cor. 1:30). Christ, therefore, justifies no man without also sanctifying him.” Calvin, *Institutes*, III.16.1.

<sup>103</sup> Horton, *Covenant and Salvation*, 198.



accomplished will take though union with him. However, justification should not be set in contrast with union, but must always be seen as complementary to it.<sup>104</sup>

Perhaps it would be best to conclude that the declaration that is justification is a performative declaration.<sup>105</sup> It conveys a status or identity, and that status or identity results in a transformation of the Christian through sanctification that results in ever-greater union with Christ, a union that itself is both the logical ground of justification and the means whereby a Christian more fully bears the image of God by more fully making God manifest in the world. This pattern fits with the account of the development of capacities arising from a particular identity that I developed above. Like any identity, the imputed righteousness of Christ conveys a status that is the basis of certain relationships – in this case a restored relationship with God – that results in a standpoint from which certain commitments and certain possible trajectories of action are possible, the execution of which can result in the development of certain Background capacities (the further

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<sup>104</sup> “Justification does not allow us to set a forensic and extrinsic verdict over against an ontological account of participation but rather establishes a forensic ontology whose reverberations can be felt and echoes heard across the entire landscape of the so-called *ordo salutis*; and not only in theory but also in corporate and individual experience and praxis. This does not mean that justification itself *includes* its effects, but that it *generates* them. Justification is exclusively juridical, yet it is the forensic origin of our union with Christ, from which all of our covenantal blessings flow.” Horton, *Covenant and Salvation*, 139. Horton and I side with a variety of Reformed theology in continuity of a trajectory associated with Westminster Theological Seminary, and in discontinuity with neoorthodoxy that would tend to pit union against forensic imputation. A. T. B. McGowan, “Justification and the *ordo salutis*,” in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006), pp. 158-162.

<sup>105</sup> This is becoming an increasingly accepted position. See Michael J. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul’s Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 101; Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *First Theology: God, Scripture & Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2002), 122; Mark A. Seifrid, “Paul’s Use of Righteousness Language Against its Hellenistic Background,” in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, eds. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 70; Horton, *Covenant and Salvation*, 240-242. Johnson makes the claim with respect to the gospel in general: Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 25.

transformation made possible through social norms will be considered next chapter). The main difference between Christian theology and the account developed above is that there is a pattern toward which Christians are being conformed and in whom they participate, expressed in the doctrine of union with Christ.

I must make three concluding comments regarding, first, common grace, second, Trinitarian appropriations, and, third, theological orthodoxy. I have argued that the goal of God's working in grace does not pit the work of redemption against the work of creation, so it is incumbent upon me to explain how the redemptive work addressed above relates to the work of God in the created order. Simply put, justification builds upon the created relationship between God and human beings expressed in the notion of the image of God, which I have suggested is the ontic core which makes justification possible. Scriptural terms like "reconciliation" (*katallassō* in 2 Cor. 5:18f and Rom. 5:10 and *apokatalassō* in Eph. 2:16 and Col. 1:20) imply a prior relationship that was damaged and is now restored – and in this case improved.<sup>106</sup> This prior relationship, rooted in the ontic core of the image of God, is of the order of creation, but the relationship is restored through justification and strengthened and nurtured through sanctification in the order of redemption. This transformation is by grace, but grace can be operative in two directions.

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<sup>106</sup> As T. F. Torrance interprets it, *apokatalassō* is "a more radical and comprehensive compound" than *katallassō*. "The addition of 'apo' seems to have a dual significance. First it makes reconciliation an even stronger expression – it is thorough reconciliation. Second, it suggests powerfully that reconciliation is not just the setting up of a relationship of peace and love that never existed before, but the restoration of a relationship of peace and love that had been destroyed. Thus in the action described by *apokatalassō* there is the closest relation between redemption and creation on the one hand, and the reaching out of reconciliation to all things, *ta panta*, on the other, to the eschatological *plērōma* or fullness." Thomas F. Torrance, *Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ* ed. Robert T. Walker. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 144. Though Torrance's point may be especially clear with respect to *apokatalassō*, the same sense of a restoration of a prior relationship is also evident in terms of the word *katallassō* in 1 Cor. 7:11, where Paul teaches that a wife who has separated from her husband should be reconciled to him, returning and restoring the broken relationship.

First, as operative directly on the individual through the Holy Spirit in sanctification, special grace conforms the believer to his new identity in Christ in the order of redemption by uniting the believer to Christ, bringing about new possibilities that were not latent within creation through the direct interlocution of communion with God. This point must be very clearly made: there is nothing within the created order that could obtain the restoration made possible through justification, something that any application of the idea of identity to a theology of economics must make quite clear. There is simply no identity that can arise within the created order that would result in a transformation mirroring sanctification. The transformation brought about through sanctification infinitely exceeds the normal transformation arising from the development of capacities within a particular identity, even if this transformation may serve as a created basis or analogue for such transformation. Second, as operative indirectly on the individual as grace mediated through the created order, common grace conforms the believer to her new identity in Christ in the order of creation, by restoring the *imago dei* as the ontic core of the transformed and renewed life through the interlocutions of society, economy, polity, and family. Again, it must be clear that secular or natural history cannot of itself reach the *telos* of humanity, but it must also be clear that the *telos* of humanity is a fulfillment of the created order, justification and adoption a fulfillment of the *imago dei*, and re-creation through sanctification and union with Christ a fulfillment of the first act of creation. Salvation does not abrogate creation, and the created order can be more or less in harmony with the order of redemption. The task of a theological economics is to identify the ways in which identities received in society or the economy may resist the

transformation wrought through the performative imputation of the identity and righteousness of the Son to the believer unto sanctification.

In all aspects of the divine *oikonomia*, we must remember that God is the one who undividedly works to bring about redemption, but since it is the triune God who acts, we must interpret the *oikonomia* in terms that allow us to distinctively relate to Father, Son, and Spirit. In the case of justification, this means we must appropriate the undivided divine action to the Son, insofar as the Son's unique hypostasis is most clearly revealed in justification according to the Scriptures. While the Father and the Spirit have a role in justification,<sup>107</sup> this justification is made possible by the atoning work of Christ, grounded in the believer's union with Christ, oriented toward the sanctification that conforms one to Christ, and applied when a Christian comes to faith in Christ as the one through whom justification is made possible. In short, justification is *solus Christus*, and through such justification the Christian especially has communion with the Son. If God's redemptive act issues from the Father's act of revelation that allows for the possibility of creaturely communion with God, the identity received in Christ through justification actualizes such personal relationships with Father, Son, and Spirit. This sets the Father's act of revelation in relationship to the justification in the Son in a relationship of efficient to formal cause.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> The point is clearly made in Johannes Wollebius: "The efficient cause of justification, that is, the agent that does it, is the entire Holy Trinity. 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself' (2 Cor. 5:19). 'But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God' (1 Cor. 6:11)." Johannes Wollebius, *Compendium Theologiae Christianae*, in *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. and trans. John W. Beardslee III (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), XXX.3.

<sup>108</sup> In Reformed theology, this relationship is often expressed in terms of the relationship between the eternal *pactum salutis* and the redemptive work of Christ in history which was "in virtue of that pact." See Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics Vol. 3*, 523. We do see explicit claims that Christ is the formal cause of justification, as in, for example, Ursinus, *Commentary*, 330-331.

Calvin rightly teaches that orthodoxy concerns both right knowledge of humanity and right knowledge of God,<sup>109</sup> so the doctrine of justification must be the center of orthodox theology insofar as in this doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone the true nature of humanity and of God are revealed.<sup>110</sup> Human beings are sinners reconciled to God through unity with Christ. They are creatures whose *telos* is Christoformity. God is the gracious God who meets the sinner precisely in this merciful declaration of pardon, adoption, and reconciliation. Therefore, identity as the correlate in the order of creation to the performative declaration of justification in the order of redemption becomes the basis for our enquiry as to whether the economy is a common grace-enabled source of concurrent action of God and economic agents toward the formation in orthodoxy that enables communion with God, or whether such formation undermines common grace and turns the economy toward sin through the destruction of a right understanding of human beings.

I should now briefly clarify what will be covered in greater depth in chapter 6 to avoid misunderstanding: justification as the gift of God is both irrevocable and immediately complete, so any failure by a Christian to live out the identity of Christ in the economy does not jeopardize that person's eternal status before God. However, justification is necessarily connected with sanctification, something that can progress at varying degrees throughout the life of a believer. As I will explain more fully in chapter 6, when a Christian does not live in conformity to Christ in the economy, or when the economy is not oriented toward such a life, it is sanctification that is jeopardized.

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<sup>109</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, I.1.1.

<sup>110</sup> Jüngel puts the matter clearly: "The beginning and end of the Christian faith is to be found in our justification in Jesus Christ alone." Eberhard Jüngel, *Justification: The Heart of the Christian Faith*, trans. Jeffrey F. Cayzer (New York: T&T Clark, 2001), 149.

Sanctification within the economy unfolds from the identity received in Christ such that when economic actions rooted in identity are undermined through instrumental logic and depersonalization, a Christian cannot easily live according to the identity received in justification and thereby develop in sanctification. When this occurs, common grace is no longer operative within the economy toward sanctification. With this connection now clear, we can return again to the question of identity in the economy.

### **Economic Models, Depersonalization, and Failure to Engage Identity**

In his first epistle, Peter writes, “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Pet. 4:10). Christian identity includes within it certain moral commitments and possible trajectories of action within the economic sphere: “unreciprocated giving, almsgiving, land restoration, debt remission, slave release, and in the extensive positive obligations of the gospels,” as Albino Barrera summarizes them.<sup>111</sup> In the context of a social imaginary that would prevent someone from participating in the Father’s work in creation that is ordered toward redemption, a theology that emphasizes the economic ramifications of the Christian identity received in justification could work powerfully to counteract certain sinful or unjust market constructions arising from this fundamental misperception of the world. Similarly, an economic theory that allowed for the construction of markets with an eye toward creating structures that encouraged economic agents to act in accordance with their identities could allow economic interactions to take the form of more closely concurrent work with the divine acts of common grace in the economy. Unfortunately, a major problem facing the advancement of theological economics is the fact that identity

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<sup>111</sup> Barrera, *God*, 137.

has a very small place in much of modern economic theory, to the end of the depersonalization discussed earlier in the chapter.

The work of John Davis helps to clearly describe the curious absence of identity in economic theory. Davis suggests that there are two basic components in any attempt to coherently describe individuals and identity. (Note that Davis does not use the term “individual” in contradistinction to “person” as I have throughout much of this work.<sup>112</sup> More on this momentarily.) Davis calls the first the “individuation criterion,” which suggests that an adequate conception of the individual must represent that individual as “distinct and independent beings.” In essence, Davis is here expressing what I have discussed above as the uniqueness of the person. Without such uniqueness, a concept fails to allow for individuation. The second principle put forward by Davis is the “reidentification criterion.”

This criterion requires that individuals that have already been shown to be distinct and independent in some conception of them can be reidentified as distinct and independent in those same terms across some process of change.<sup>113</sup>

Such reidentification would be a necessary requirement for assessing or even discussing any formative influence of market interactions on an economic agent over time, such as the sort of formation in the image of God by which one becomes most fully a person, as discussed earlier in the chapter. Without these two aspects, an economic model lacks an

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<sup>112</sup> Davis distinguishes the term “personal identity” from “individual identity” and attributes the former to philosophy and the latter to economic theory. Ultimately, individual identity merely refers to the question of distinguishing and reidentifying an economic agent “across change in economic life” while personal identity is “understood as a matter of reidentification across change in one’s life generally.” For his purposes, this distinction is no doubt a helpful one, but given the common theological distinction I am making between person and individual throughout this chapter, I will opt to disregard Davis’s distinction as more confusing than helpful in the present context. John B. Davis, *The Theory of the Individual in Economics: Identity and Value* (London: Routledge, 2003), 187.

<sup>113</sup> John B. Davis, *Individuals and Identity in Economics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 5.

adequate theory of identity and of personhood (I will henceforward drop Davis's preference for the term "individual" so as to better fit with the terminology deployed elsewhere in the chapter).

Interestingly, Davis considers neoclassical economic models and concludes that these models lack an adequate basis for either individuation or reidentification. Standard neoclassical models represent economic agents through a utility function, which serves as the basis of a number of microeconomic models of exchange. Davis demonstrates that such utility functions cannot allow for individuation because of a problem he describes as the challenge of "multiple selves." There is no obvious reason why a single economic agent cannot have multiple utility functions that are manifest at various times in the multiple roles that the agent may fulfill in daily life. In such circumstances, a utility function alone cannot fully individuate an economic agent.<sup>114</sup> This problem is amplified in numerous economic models that focus on "collective individuals" like firms or households, "subsuming the human individuals who make them up."<sup>115</sup> Earlier in this chapter we discussed the example of "labor" treated as abstract and intersubstitutable, another example of what Davis calls "collective individuals." Such prevalent collective individuality in models coupled with the problem of multiple selves reveals that most models lack the ability to speak of what I have called the human person.

Davis also shows how standard neoclassical economic models are inadequate in reference to the reidentification criterion. Utility functions typically express a set of ordered preferences, but to unify these discrete preferences we must posit some single reality to which all of these preferences belong. Utility functions – and thus standard

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 66-69.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 79.



neoclassical economics – do not describe what this single reality is. “Preferences are only a form of experience, and, when we inspect our preferences, we do not detect among them any substantial self or individual.”<sup>116</sup> Preferences cannot even serve as a basis of identification, much less reidentification. Davis notes that the more recent theory of human capital overcomes the problem facing preference theories, but a new set of problems emerges, the most substantial of which is the problem of the social nature of human capital. If human capital is socially determined, it no longer can serve as a basis of reidentifying a single economic agent precisely because “these embodiments could not be strictly identified with the individual alone.”<sup>117</sup> Many standard economic models therefore lack the basic capacity to reidentify distinct economic agents. Lacking an adequate expression of identity and personhood, it is not surprising that most economic models and theories do not even substantively treat these topics.

Admittedly, some economists have recognized the significance of identity in the market and have sought to understand how differences in identity have economic consequences. For example, a study by Hoff and Pandey found that students in India from low-caste groups would perform far more poorly in solving puzzles when their identities were made public in a multi-caste context. The authors suggest that varying identities can result in different economic outcomes, but they were also able to modify the experiments so that bringing attention to identity in this manner did not result in so

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 54. Here Davis gives voice to what he imagines David Hume’s response to neoclassical theory would be. Given that Davis appears to agree with his reconstruction of Hume here, I present the statement as his own.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 59.

drastic of a shift.<sup>118</sup> Similarly, Akerlof and Kranton have applied the concept of identity to explain why certain industries are dominated by a particular gender, and to explore how racial identities may contribute to poverty and unequal economic opportunities.<sup>119</sup> Though these studies still remain problematic in terms of individuation and reidentification, as I will show below, at the very least studies such as these should demonstrate to economists that disciplines like theology that consider the formation of human persons in terms of identity can have something to say in economic discussion. Indeed, from a Christian standpoint where God's disclosure of the true nature and end of the human person is best described in theological terms of the *imago Dei*, theology must have a voice to ensure economic models compatible with and leading to orthodoxy.

Though some economists are quite aware of the influence that identity can have on the development of an economy, their modeling of identity generally remains problematic. For example, Kranton and Akerlof assume that individuals choose their own identity, but in reality identity is often received, or else it is partly chosen and partly received.<sup>120</sup> Their depiction is therefore both implausible and theologically unacceptable from a Reformed perspective, given that Christian identity is given by grace through justification and not by choice. Beyond this implausible and theologically unacceptable assumption, Akerlof and Kranton's theory faces a problem insofar as identity is represented in their model as "an argument of the utility function," as Davis notes. Given that Akerlof and Kranton follow normal protocol in reducing economic agents to utility

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<sup>118</sup> Karla Hoff and Priyanka Pandey, "Belief systems and Durable Inequalities: An Experimental Investigation of Indian Caste," *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 3351* (June 2004).

<sup>119</sup> Akerlof and Kranton, *Identity Economics*, chapters 7 and 8.

<sup>120</sup> Ben Fine, "The Economics of Identity and the Identity of Economics?" *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 33.9 (2009), 180-181.

functions, the result is that there is no person outside of the utility function that can determine whether the vector representing various identities determine preferences in various situations.<sup>121</sup> In short, Akerlof and Kranton's model eliminates true individuation, and thus fails to represent true personhood.

Several major problems arise from the fact that most economic models cannot adequately treat personhood. The first is the aforementioned problem of depersonalization. When models use abstraction to treat persons as part of "collective individuals" like firms or "labor," the very deployment of models in constructing markets serves to contribute to the depersonalizing nature of certain economic social imaginaries discussed in the previous chapter. The second main problem is that models without an adequate conception of personhood cannot even begin to adequately treat the question of the formation of individual persons so that markets can be designed so as to allow for the actualization of particular identities that will allow for virtuous trajectories of action and the development of morally acceptable Background capacities. In fact, the mere question of basic moral commitments is often largely neglected, given the fact that identity is not even a pressing concern. Third and finally, when markets are not constructed with questions of identity in mind, individual economic agents are inadvertently discouraged from considering questions of identity in the marketplace. To be sure, there are times where identity resists such tendencies, as in the case of Japanese labor markets. However, there are certainly also other situations in which such a loss of identity or fragmentation of identity undermines the coherent development of an individual, resulting in the problematic formations of modernity treated by Rommen, Bruni, Taylor, and others. Finally, the depersonalization of particular economic agents and these agents'

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<sup>121</sup> Davis, *Identity*, 82-3.

corresponding loss of identity undermines communion with God, insofar as communion places a person in relation with Father, Son, and Spirit such that each person's unique identity is affirmed and ingrafted into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-26). Without a coherent concept of identity, economic models cannot be adequately addressed from a theological standpoint with the end of ensuring that economic actions are concurrent with the divine work of grace in the economy and not sinful resistance to this plan. Any economic model that fails to properly consider the question of personhood is fundamentally heterodox in its denial of a major portion of the kerygma disclosed in creation through the *imago Dei* and in redemption through the doctrine of justification in Christ.

It would be quite easy in light of the failures of modern economic theory in terms of identity to denounce capitalism *in toto*. This would be a mistake. Capitalism itself should not be condemned for the problem of depersonalization uncovered here. There is nothing intrinsic to capitalism (a system of private property and market exchange) that would prohibit an emphasis on personal identity or the construction of markets oriented toward re-personalizing the economy. In fact, a decentralized economy would arguably provide a stronger basis for the economy on the level of interpersonal interaction. Many alternatives to capitalism tend to dissolve the person into conflictually understood economic classes that also disregard individual identity.<sup>122</sup> And while advocates of

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<sup>122</sup> In fact, an argument very much like the one Aristotle Papanikolaou makes for liberal democracy could be made in defense of a market economy. He argues that if communion with God requires a freedom to reject God, this space of freedom necessitated by divine-human communion can be found in a liberal democracy that treats each person as "irreducibly unique." Such a position allows for some distinction between the political sphere and the church, insofar as the church is not a space where such rejection is possible. The position also retains the axiom that human beings are created for divine human freedom, and thus democracy can still be oriented toward this end. The market can also be considered a space of freedom where divine-human

capitalism like Michael Novak are certainly too optimistic in their praise of corporations as a virtuous form of community,<sup>123</sup> it is in principle possible to construct markets and corporations that do avoid the problems of depersonalization. The problem is that current models that have been used to construct the economy do not allow for any personal distinction, but instead rely on abstract and instrumental logic. Alternative models (and therefore alternative markets) can be constructed.

Let me conclude the chapter, then, by pointing to one concrete example of how economic models can be oriented toward the re-personalization of the economy so that economic identities can be directed toward the identity received in justification and through union with Christ that is the culmination of human personhood. Luigino Bruni's notion of "relational goods" could help transform models so that they not only address identity, but also provide a means of analyzing the quality of interpersonal relations. (Economic justice is, after all, more properly about right relations than distribution of wealth.<sup>124</sup>) A relational good is an economic concept used to address non-instrumental relationships introduced by several authors "nearly simultaneously": Martha Nussbaum, Pierpaolo Donati, Benedetto Gui, and Carole Uhlaner. Bruni suggests that a relational good has seven aspects: (a) identity: the identities of individuals providing relational goods are not intersubstitutable; (b) reciprocity: "Inasmuch as goods are made of relationships, they can only be enjoyed reciprocally;" (c) Simultaneity: production and

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communion is possible but not absolute, a space of negative freedom that allows for a possible rejection of God, but also of positive freedom, where those who are being drawn toward communion with the Triune God can be conformed to Christ in part through common grace. See Aristotle Papanikolaou, *The Mystical as Political: Democracy and Non-Radical Orthodoxy* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 144, 158.

<sup>123</sup> Michael Novak, "Two Moral Ideals for Business," in Michael Novak, *Three in One: Essays on Democratic Capitalism, 1976-2000*, ed. Edward W. Younkins (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 228-9.

<sup>124</sup> Rieger, *Rising Tide*, 138.

consumption of the relational good is simultaneous; (d) motivations: the relationship must be the end, not the means; (e) emergent facts: “the relational good is a ‘third’ that exceeds the contributions of those involved;” (f) Gratuitousness: the relational good is a good in itself; and (g) good: the relational good is not a commodity, because while it satisfies a need, it does not have a market price.<sup>125</sup> Imagine constructing a market that seeks to allow for economic exchanges while increasing relational goods. This is precisely the sort of direction that the economy must take if it is to better serve as a conduit for common grace, yielding to and cooperating with God’s redemptive work in history toward the redemption of the Church. Until such a time as models and markets are better able to foster the development of identity, the immanent term of redemptively significant transformation in the dimension of orthodoxy will be lacking, and Christians in the marketplace will be ill equipped to resist malformation from a social imaginary or to overcome problematic norms that direct Christians toward inappropriate ends. Without appeal to identity, believers will have much more difficulty continuing to follow Christ in the economic sphere after their conversion, and this difficulty directly diminishes growth in sanctification.

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<sup>125</sup> Bruni, *The Wound and the Blessing*, 88-90.

## CHAPTER 6 – ECONOMIC NORMS AND THE SANCTIFYING SPIRIT

Market-related activity, trade and other economic functionings have to be embedded in institutions and social norms. If we refuse to embed our models consciously, we will still be doing so, only unwittingly.

- Kaushik Basu<sup>1</sup>

In 1986 a team of psychologists performed a two-step experiment to evaluate previous findings that groups are more prone to competitive behavior in games than are individuals. The experiment first had individuals participate in the classic prisoner's dilemma, a game where two individuals or teams can pursue several strategies. Designed to represent the interrogation where detectives lacking sufficient evidence to convict interrogate two culprits of a crime individually, the game recreates the temptation facing such prisoners in the face of a plea bargain. When offered a bargain, each prisoner can remain silent, which will result in the best outcome provided that the other prisoner is also silent. The prisoner can also take the plea bargain, receiving a reduced sentence while the other prisoner would get a full sentence. If, however, the prisoner remains silent but his partner confesses, then he will receive a full sentence. Frequently, the prisoner's dilemma results in self-interested behavior where both parties confess in order to receive a plea bargain, and this is especially the case when two groups play the game.

Following the prisoner's dilemma, participants took part in a second game designed to test self-interest. As Insko and Schopler note in their thorough evaluation of the study, "the idea was to expose subjects to a situation in which competitiveness did or did not occur prior to their participation" in the second game.<sup>2</sup> The second game is known as mere-categorization, and like the prisoner's dilemma it had already been studied by

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<sup>1</sup> Kaushik Basu, *Prelude to Political Economy: A Study of the Social and Political Foundations of Economics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 68.

<sup>2</sup> Chester A. Insko and John Schopler, "Categorization, Competition, and Collectivity," in *Group Processes*, ed. Clyde Hendrick (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1987), 234.

various psychologists. The game divided participants into two groups based on purported preferences for the art of Klee or Kandinsky as determined by participants viewing several pieces of art and responding. Groups were then asked to allocate money to unidentified members of their own groups and of other groups. Insko and Schopler explain, “If the group-on-group play of the [prisoner’s dilemma] created a belief in the appropriateness of competitiveness, that belief should carry over to the mere-categorization situation where competitiveness less obviously occurs [as was known from previous iterations of the game].”<sup>3</sup> The second experiment revealed that participants who worked in groups during the prisoner’s dilemma game and who therefore saw more self-interested outcomes were significantly more self-interested in the mere-categorization game, allocating much more money to those who shared their preferences for art. This outcome is now discussed under the label of the “discontinuity effect.”

There are two possible explanations for the discontinuity effect. The first is known as the “schema-based distrust hypothesis,” which posits that groups are more likely to expect an outgroup to act selfishly and therefore are more likely to respond to this expectation by acting selfishly themselves. While plausible, this explanation does not adequately explain why groups in a mere-categorization game that are primed through group participation in the prisoner’s dilemma to see self-interest as acceptable act more selfishly than groups who are not primed in this way.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, a second explanation is needed: the “social support for shared self-interest hypothesis.” This hypothesis suggests

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Incidentally, this explanation may help reveal why groups participating in the prisoner’s dilemma act in a more self-interested way in the first place.



that group members support one another in acting selfishly.<sup>5</sup> Specifically, we might speak of social norms as the basis for such outcomes. If self-interest is a social norm, it will become more readily manifest in social situations, especially in the context where that norm has been strengthened or highlighted as in the two stage experiment just discussed.

The implications of these findings for the present work are considerable, for here again the strong fact/value distinction often manifest in standard economic theory's positive/normative distinction is untenable. Standard economic theory often treats self-interest as positively demonstrable through empirical confirmation of predictions made by models of self-interested agents, but the matter is not one of pure positive analysis.

Dale Miller puts the matter nicely:

That the explanatory power of the self-interest assumption has been the major focus of the self-interest debate is understandable, but it has also proven limiting. In particular it has forestalled consideration of the theory's causal power – a serious omission, as the assumption of self-interest is not simply an abstract theoretical concept but a collectively shared cultural ideology.<sup>6</sup>

Quantitative analysis of economic actions that confirm predications made by the standard *homo economicus* view of human nature may still not demonstrate that the actual motives of economic agents can accurately be interpreted in light of utility maximization. Miller insists that it may instead merely reveal that social norms oriented toward self-interest are particularly strong.<sup>7</sup> Here Miller does not go far enough, insofar as he defines a social norm as something with the “power to induce people to act publicly in ways that deviate from their private inclinations.”<sup>8</sup> As I argued in chapter 5, our understanding of the world

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<sup>5</sup> Gary Bornstein, “A Classification of Games by Player Type,” in *New Issues and Paradigms in Research on Social Dilemmas*, eds. Anders Biel, Daniel Eck, Tommy Gärling, and Mathias Gustafsson (New York: Springer, 2008), 28.

<sup>6</sup> D. T. Miller, “The Norm of Self-Interest,” *American Psychologist* 54.12 (Dec. 1999), 1053.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 1056.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

and our repeated response to it in particular ways can actually develop a set of capacities that may indeed shift our “private inclinations.” Therefore, while it must be granted that social norms can cause actions that deviate from our internal dispositions, the more important question that this chapter will address is how such norms as influenced by models can in fact shape the very internal dispositions and capabilities that make the discontinuity effect evident. I will show that, over time, social norms can indeed shift individual behavior in two ways. First, the direct influence of norms circulated through intersubjective interactions can create patterns of behavior driven by internal capacities and capabilities. Second, indirect influence of norms can be applied externally through practices embedded in social institutions. In this instance, I will particularly highlight incentives.<sup>9</sup>

This chapter will explore how God can work concurrently toward a redemptively significant end through the intersubjective human actions that perpetuate social norms and through the external structural forces that reinforce or undermine such norms by appropriating such divine action to the Holy Spirit. Here the Spirit’s sanctifying work through special grace finds a created basis in the order of creation in the Spirit’s work through common grace whereby all of creation is oriented toward the redemption of the Church for the purpose of its communion with the triune God. For this reason, a key

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<sup>9</sup> A similar distinction is made in Barry Schwartz, “Psychology, Idea Technology, and Ideology,” *Psychological Science* 8.1 (Jan. 1997), 22. Schwartz helpfully distinguished between situations in which our view of a thing makes it true and when beliefs lead to “practices that shape social institutions” causing the belief to become true. Schwartz provides a number of examples to illustrate the latter possibility, ranging from Skinnerian external reinforcement as a necessary basis for behavior modification, to discussions of how theories suggesting intelligence cannot increase could result in expectations and institutions that prevent the very growth of intelligence. His article can therefore provide additional examples to this chapter’s focus on incentives.

component of the chapter is the connection between the identity received in Christ through justification and the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification that brings the performative speech act of justification to fruition in the ever-increasing union of Christ with the Church. It is only through this union that common grace finds its fulfillment in special grace, that creation is perfected in redemption, and that the Father's self-revelation through the Son who justifies the believer results in Spirit-empowered divine-human communion.

### **The External Regulation of Economic Actions: Technology and Incentives**

As discussed in chapter 3 in terms of Kevin Hector's pneumatology, and as will again be discussed later in this chapter, norms are perhaps the created reality through which we can best understand the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. In the economy, however, the significance of norms is often downplayed. Instead, external, non-interpersonal means of regulating human actions are fundamental to the enduring institutions constitutive of all constructed markets. As I have already briefly suggested in chapter 4, economic models themselves can serve as an external means of regulating human behavior. Michel Callon in particular highlights this fact when he argues that "mathematical economics" can become "realistic under certain conditions," namely, when "calculative agencies are there to introduce interrelated calculations in decisions and in the formation of actions."<sup>10</sup> While I am less certain than I read Callon to be that all realism in mathematical economic models can be traced to the performative influence of models, his point is still well taken.

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<sup>10</sup> Callon, *Laws*, 50.

The place of models in networks as external calculative agencies that result in predicted human actions is best understood through several illustrations. In chapter 4 I illustrated the fact that models can be performative and thus can influence human actions by discussing the Black-Scholes-Merton model for options pricing. Recall that when options trading began in Chicago the model was a poor fit, but over time human actions and option prices both converged on predictions made by the models. This must be primarily seen as a sort of external regulation of human actions, made possible by a certain social imaginary sustained within models and influential on individuals who have a particular identity. The regulation is external because predicted outcomes were brought to pass by external means. Initially, statistical sheets were circulated to traders, creating the obligation to conform to scientific rigor to maintain the identity of a professional trader, who would follow the sheets' scientific recommendations.<sup>11</sup> While internal norms no doubt contributed to the widespread adoption of the sheets, the sheets themselves externally determined the actual actions of buying and selling. In due time, statistical sheets were replaced by computer programs, and today to an increasing degree financial transactions depend upon the automated buying and selling facilitated by such programs following certain models.

The Black-Scholes-Merton model is certainly not the only example of an economic model incorporated into concrete economic processes. Consider, for example, Critical Path Management (CPM), a form of linear programming that solves what economists call an optimization problem, in this case the problem of determining the quickest and most efficient path to completing a project. CPM is deployed in many industries, ranging from weapons contractors to software firms to architectural and

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<sup>11</sup> Mackenzie, *Engine*, 160-162.

construction companies. Both charts and software platforms are available to complete the calculations for companies.<sup>12</sup> Like the Black-Scholes-Merton, CPM serves as part of a calculative network that allows economic agents to act according to the normative economic notions concerning ideal economic behavior that are implicit in many economic models. Against approaches like economic personalism that challenge the accuracy of economic models built upon the *homo economicus*, we must remember the way that model-inspired technologies can cause human beings to act *as if* they actually fit the *homo economicus* anthropology.

Changes in economic behavior can also be accompanied by changes in the underlying set of Background capacities possible within a social imaginary and typically activated within a given identity. This is particularly evident in the second external means of regulating human behavior in the market that this chapter will study: incentives. Ruth Grant helpfully explains the three basic components of an incentive:

Incentives ‘strictly speaking’ are a particular kind of offer: 1. an extrinsic benefit or bonus that is neither the natural or automatic consequence of an action nor a deserved reward or compensation; 2. a discrete prompt expected to elicit a particular response; and 3. an offer intentionally designed to alter the status quo by motivating a person to choose differently than he or she would be likely to choose in its absence.<sup>13</sup>

In most economic control processes designed to prompt a particular response, whether centralized or iterative/market driven, incentives play a major role. G. C. Archibald explains that such control processes begin with a “qualitative rule” used to determine “what is optimal.” In most cases, this rule will be derived at least in part from an

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<sup>12</sup> For a brief summary, see Litan, *Trillion Dollar Economists*, 82-84. For a more extensive example in terms of construction, see Jonathan F. Hutchings, *Project Scheduling Handbook* (New York: Marcel Dekker, 2004), 55-77.

<sup>13</sup> Ruth W. Grant, *Strings Attached: Untangling the Ethics of Incentives* (Princeton: University Press, 2012), 43

economic model. These processes will also require some kind of implementation system that leads economic agents to act in the optimal fashion as defined by the model, and this system usually consists of an incentive structure.<sup>14</sup> Archibald provides many examples, the most easily accessible of which is the example of television. Suppose at a given time 80% of the population favors a show of type A and 20% of type B and that there are three private television stations whose earnings come from advertizing sales. All three will present shows of variety A to maximize viewership and ad revenue. This situation is not Pareto optimal (a standard economic model for welfare economics) because changes could be made to the market where some viewers would be better off without harming other viewers. A solution can be found in establishing a public channel whose goal is to maximize total viewership for the market, and which will therefore put on a type B show. Of course, the public channel's managers would need to be incentivized to ensure this outcome. The basic pattern illustrated here is the need to recognize a sub-optimal outcome through an economic model, to design a market where it is possible to overcome the sub-optimal outcome, and then to incentivize the proper individuals so that they meet the objectives of the model.<sup>15</sup> Incentives are thus an important external means of norming human behavior toward model-determined ends.

The use of incentives sounds innocent enough until you begin to survey the literature of the impact of incentives on economic agents. Studies have time and again shown that when a particular action is incentivized, linking that action to an extrinsic benefit, two common problems occur. The first is known as "crowding out." When

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<sup>14</sup> G. C. Archibald, *Information, Incentives, and the Economics of Control* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 30-31.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 86-88.

external motivation is supplied for an action, internal motivation tends to wither.<sup>16</sup> For example, when blood donation was augmented by a system offering incentives for giving blood in the United States, donations significantly declined. More than this, “our internalized benevolence towards those unknown to us, who need blood, began to atrophy from nonuse.” Over a similar time span, donations in the United Kingdom, where incentives for donations were not offered, remained strong, as did the general benevolence needed to motivate individuals to donate blood.<sup>17</sup> Several outstanding surveys of the literature come to similar conclusions: in whatever area incentives are offered, be it to encourage children to draw during recess or to persuade students to obtain high grades, internal motivation is reduced and often practically eliminated.<sup>18</sup> The second major problem with incentivizing is known as the “spillover effect.” When incentives eliminate internal motivation through crowding out, they tend to also eliminate internal motivation in other areas of human action. Incentivizing blood donations also harms the internal motivation to be honest; more donors will lie about their health status. Incentivizing teachers by test scores will cause a higher number of teachers to modify students’ answers on exams. When students are incentivized, cheating goes up but results on academic performance as a whole may be mixed.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Grant, *Strings Attached*, 115-116. cf. Long and Fox, *Calculated*, 67-8.

<sup>17</sup> Charles K. Wilber, “Trust, Moral Hazards, and Social Economics: Incentives and the Organization of Work,” in *Economics, Ethics, and Public Policy*, ed. Charles K. Wilber (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 99.

<sup>18</sup> Deci, Ryan and Costner survey 128 studies that demonstrate the same crowding-out effect for incentives. Edward L. Deci, Richard M. Ryan, and Richard Koestner, “A Meta-Analytic Review of Experiments Examining the Effects of Extrinsic Rewards on Intrinsic Motivation,” *Psychological Bulletin* 125.6 (1999): 627-668. See similar surveys in Robert E. Lane, *The Market Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 371-374.

<sup>19</sup> Grant, *Strings Attached*, 117.

Both the crowding out and spillover effect may be linked to a fundamental shift in social imaginary. After all, the day care example provided at the beginning of chapter 4 is simply an example of what happens when you offer disincentives. It is reasonable to imagine that a similar shift in imaginary accompanies the loss of intrinsic motivators through the crowding out and spillover effect. Likewise, though most studies do not consider this question, I hypothesize that these shifts are accompanied by subtle changes in self-understanding and identity. As one's imaginary changes, the place one occupies in the imaginary can also change, and this place is regulated by identity. Even if these prior two shifts do not occur, there can be little debate that habitual actions and norms themselves are changed when incentives are used. Therefore, in considering incentives we begin to piece together how constructed markets may shape us through the immanent terms of social imaginaries, identities, and norms in the dimensions of orthopathy, orthodoxy, and orthopraxis, which I have argued must be interpreted either as the work of particular divine Persons in common grace, or the work of human beings who refuse this grace, depending on whether the transformation is redemptively significant or sinful and maladaptive. Perhaps discussing two examples in more depth may be helpful in illustrating the point.

The most common use of incentives in the economy concerns employee and executive compensation. Interestingly, when surveyed, employees tend to state that financial incentives are not the best way to encourage employee productivity. Most employees claim to prefer a sense of significant, challenging work, and opportunity for growth and advancement over financial incentives.<sup>20</sup> Despite this, use of incentives has

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<sup>20</sup> Frederick Herzberg, "One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?" *Harvard Business Review* 46.1 (Jan/Feb 1968): 53-62.



become increasingly common, especially as a part of executive compensation packages.<sup>21</sup>

If we consider the spillover effect and crowding out effect so commonly observed in terms of compensation packages, we would expect a resulting decrease in internal motivation and a decline in various related intrinsic motivators rooted in the intrinsic good of an action. This should make incentives the subject of intense scrutiny, but this is rarely the case. For example, John Reynolds considers problems surrounding investment banking after the 2008 global financial crisis. He clearly explains how investment bankers' salaries are a mix of shares and salary "based on a review of an individual's contribution to the bank's profit or loss."<sup>22</sup> These incentives are designed to encourage bankers to be cautious and prudent, avoiding unnecessary risk and promoting the security of the bank because stability is in their own self-interest because they are stakeholders. Despite equity in the banks (sometimes worth hundreds of millions), many bank executives still prioritized high-risk, short-term gain to long-term gains and security leading up to the 2008 financial crisis. Reynolds attributes this to high turnover rates, particularly among junior bankers, that undermine any orientation toward long-term stability that incentives might provide.<sup>23</sup> He concludes by cautioning against any major change in the banking system, merely suggesting that incentives for ethical behavior may

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<sup>21</sup> This shift is partly the result of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, which limited corporations' deductions for executive salary to \$1 million, unless that pay was linked with performance. As a result, performance-based incentives have increased as a portion of executive pay, with fixed salary only making up ten to twelve percent of executive pay for S&P 500 companies as of 2012. Robert W. Kolb, *Too Much is Not Enough: Incentives in Executive Compensation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 12-14.

<sup>22</sup> John Reynolds, "Investment Banking: The Inevitable Triumph of Incentives Over Ethics," in *Crisis and Recovery: Ethics, Economics and Justice*, eds. Rowan Williams and Larry Elliott (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 126.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 130-133.

not “outweigh” those for unethical behavior.<sup>24</sup> In other words, the collapse was a mistake in judgment, not evidence of a decline in ethics. While I have no doubt that many virtuous bankers still work in firms across the globe, a response encouraging banks to double-down on incentives by increasing them so that they outweigh unethical behavior misses the basic point: external motivations kill the very intrinsic ethical factors that are necessary for financial stability. Reynolds offers neither an orthopathic understanding of the economy, nor a reasonable basis for orthopraxis.

Consider a second example: incentives as a basis for ecological care. Incentives in ecological care typically take two forms. Occasionally, effluent fees are implemented, where pollution is directly disincentivized through monetary fines. Such an approach faces numerous legislative problems given the challenges of predicting the level of fine that will reduce pollution to a desired level. A second and much more popular approach involves constructing a market for tradable pollution permits, where firms purchase pollution permits on an open market such that the total pollution allocation is below a certain critical threshold.<sup>25</sup> Such a permit system still functions as an incentive insofar as it offers the extrinsic benefit of lower costs to those who institute environmentally friendly technologies and who therefore do not need to purchase permits. Thus, permits are a prompt designed to elicit a response that alters the status quo of polluting toward more ecologically sustainable approaches. As an incentive, we can therefore expect to find both the crowding out and spillover effects. There is some evidence that this may occur, and that permits do not successfully target the underlying problems leading to

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 143-144.

<sup>25</sup> For a helpful summary of these perspectives and the economic arguments for tradable permits, see Wallace E. Oates, *The Economics of Environmental Regulation* (Brookfield, VT: Edward Elgar, 1996), 125-135. Note that Oates speaks explicitly about designing markets.

pollution in the first place. For example, permit systems may cause some firms to simply “substitute from controlled emissions to uncontrolled pollutants.”<sup>26</sup> In other words, the system does not create any internal motive to reduce pollution because it substitutes an extrinsic benefit for the intrinsic benefit of a healthy created world.

Theologians and ethicists frequently disagree with economists over permit systems for pollution regulation. André Fourçans helpfully notes that economists tend to emphasize ethical outcomes, while moral philosophers emphasize ethical intentions, a divergence in what I have called an imaginary. He adds that moral philosophers also have a different understanding of the identity of economic agents, emphasizing social embeddedness where economists see individual evaluators who change most easily by use of incentives.<sup>27</sup> Having granted these differences, Fourçans then attempts to adjudicate between these two possibilities by recourse to cost-benefit analysis, arguing that other forms of ethical analysis cannot decide “whether the health of asthmatics or the elderly has more ‘moral importance’ than for example the jobs and the livelihood of workers” in questions of environmental policy. Instead, all ethical concerns should be incorporated into analysis by assigning costs to them and performing a cost-benefit analysis.<sup>28</sup> He then argues that market-based incentive approaches have a lower social cost and higher expected benefits.<sup>29</sup>

The approach Fourçans puts forward is flawed in several respects. It should be obvious that he fails to pass his own critique: if it is impossible to determine which

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<sup>26</sup> R. Quentin Grafton et al., *The Economics of the Environment and Natural Resources* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 81.

<sup>27</sup> André Fourçans, “Firms and the Environment: Ethics or Incentives?” in *Ethical Boundaries of Capitalism*, eds. Daniel Daianu and Radu Vranceanu (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 201-202.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 204-5.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 209.

concern has greater moral importance, then it should be equally impossible to assign differing monetary values to these concerns based on relative moral importance. Having pointed out this inconsistency, I am not ready to concede that theologians and ethicists cannot establish relative weight to various moral concerns, though I admit that this may not be possible in all situations.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, a more important problem with Fourçans's approach is that he depersonalizes the economy by substituting monetary evaluations for moral concerns related to concrete persons and that he offers external motivations for a problem that must ultimately be overcome through recognition of the intrinsic good of creation and resulting internal motivation to reduce pollution. As a result of this heteropathic and depersonalizing imaginary, Fourçans advocates policies that will ultimately only reduce orthopraxis as the crowding out effect eliminates virtuous internal motivations, resulting in the malformation of economic agents. A far better methodological approach is found among advocates of the re-imagining approach like Sallie McFague and John Cobb who have addressed ecological concerns. Despite my ultimate reservations with the metaphysical assumptions of both theologians, I find their arguments for the need to shift imaginaries from "economism" to "earthism,"<sup>31</sup> or from

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<sup>30</sup> While I remain skeptical of Wogaman's reduction of theology to merely determining the value of values and thereby establishing the relative weight of different moral considerations, as I noted in chapter 1, I nevertheless must admit that this weighting may be a part of the role for theological ethics in economic matters, albeit one less significant than addressing the basic formative nature of economics and the way that God can concurrently act through the economy toward redemption. See Wogaman, *Economics and Ethics*, 2, 6, 11.

<sup>31</sup> John Cobb highlights a major problem in the contemporary economy in what he calls "economism," which he sees as a "ruling ideology," even a "Way," by which he means "a way of thought that organizes life individually and collectively." Though his ideas here are somewhat underdeveloped, I interpret him to be speaking of something much akin to what I have deemed the social imaginary. Cobb advocates a shift away from economism toward earthism, a movement initially quite secular and influenced by Native American spirituality, but which Cobb finds largely compatible with Christian theology and the basis for a new Way, a new orientation in the world. John B. Cobb Jr., *Spiritual Bankruptcy: A Prophetic Call to Action* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2010), 111-124.

an “economic worldview” to “a planetary theology” and “ecological worldview,”<sup>32</sup> a proper theological approach. Right action is only possible within the horizon of a proper imaginary, and is only fully realized within a trajectory of action internalized because it conforms to a particular identity. Therefore, as I have attempted to show through the case studies of corporate incentives and environmental policy, a study of orthopraxis in the economy must move beyond the external regulation offered by technology and incentives to consider internal regulation through norms. The first step toward a theology of norms in the economy is a theology of the Spirit that is properly attentive to the social nature of sanctification. I turn now to the development of this pneumatology.

### **The Sanctifying Spirit and the Created Order**

Noting the Pauline benediction, “The fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Cor. 13:13, cf. Phil. 2:1), Jürgen Moltmann writes, “the creation of community” – here *koinōnia*, which I have been treating with the label communion – “is evidently the goal of God’s life-giving Spirit in the world of nature and human beings.”<sup>33</sup> While we ought not to draw too sharp a distinction between the divine persons in the work of creating the community of the Church (after all, Paul also speaks of the believer being called into fellowship of the Son in 1 Cor. 1:9), Moltmann does rightly note the social nature of sanctification through the Holy Spirit: “God is experienced not merely individually, in the encounter of the individual, solitary soul with itself. He is experienced socially too, in the encounter with others.”<sup>34</sup> Though the sociality of sanctification and the

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<sup>32</sup> As discussed in chapter 1, McFague sees such a shift in imagination as a necessary basis for a theological response to economy and planet. McFague, *Life Abundant*.

<sup>33</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992), 219.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

distinctive mission of the Holy Spirit could be defended by appeal to many significant modern Reformed theologians ranging from Barth<sup>35</sup> to Gunton,<sup>36</sup> this emphasis can be found much earlier in scripture and in the Reformed tradition.

Though the Holy Spirit is not as prominent in the Old Testament, the social nature of the Holy Spirit's work is still evident. Responding to the common claim that the Spirit is given to individuals in the Old Testament and to the Church in the New, Thiselton rightly notes, "the gift of the Spirit is given to individuals only to promote *the welfare of the community* of Israel."<sup>37</sup> He points to the example of the book of Judges, where "at least seven of the judges receive the enabling of the divine Spirit" but

each of these manifestations of the Spirit of God ultimately *preserved Israel* from broadly the era of Joshua to that of Saul or of the kings, while 'in those days there was no king in Israel' (Judg. 18:1). Even if the Spirit anointed chosen individuals, this served *the people of God as a whole*.<sup>38</sup>

We also see the breath or Spirit of the Lord playing a significant role in the Exodus event, an event which, along with the promise to Abraham, constitutes Israel as a distinct nation. After passing through the red sea, Moses and the Israelites attribute the parting of the waters and the subsequent drowning of the Egyptian army to the *rûah* (Ex. 15:8, 10),

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<sup>35</sup> "From the very outset Jesus Christ did not envisage individual followers, disciples and witnesses but a plurality of such united by Him both with Himself and with one another. To be sure, He was thinking in terms of individuals and not of an anonymous number, collection, conglomeration or collective. But His purpose in relation to the individual was not just to set him in a kind of uni-dimensional relationship to Himself. It was to unite him both with Himself and also, if in a very different sense and under very different conditions, with the other individuals whom He has called, and wills to call, and will call." Barth, *Dogmatics*, IV.3.2, 682.

<sup>36</sup> "Sanctification means being made holy, and it is the purpose for which justification is conferred. The holiness of the community is not primarily the holiness of the individuals within it – though that is part of it – but that of a people bound together because they share in the life of worship, proclamation, teaching, sharing, and good works." Colin E. Gunton, *The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 148.

<sup>37</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit – In Biblical Teaching, Through the Centuries, and Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2013), 9.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.

a trope found elsewhere in the OT canon (Isa. 63:11b-12).<sup>39</sup> The Spirit is therefore central in the creation of the Israelite community. Though more muted than in the New Testament, there is a clear social dynamic to the Spirit's work in the Old Testament.

Particularly in Paul's writings, the New Testament makes the sociality of the Spirit's work even clearer by highlighting a "corporate dimension to sanctification," to use Peterson's terminology.<sup>40</sup> This is manifest when Paul describes sanctification as a formation into a single body or collectively into a temple of the Lord (1 Cor. 3:16-17, 12:13, 2 Cor. 6:16-18, Eph. 2:21-22).<sup>41</sup> It is also evident in Paul's common usage of *sun-* compounds. Paul regularly crafts such compounds to speak of believers in the plural being "buried with Christ" (*sunetaphēmen*, Rom. 6:4), "joined with him" (*sumphutoi*, Rom. 6:5), "crucified with him" (*sunestaurōthē*, Rom. 6:6), "living with him" (*suzesomēn autō*, Rom. 6:8), "being glorified with him" (*sundoxasthōmen*, Rom. 8:17), and so forth. Christians are, as a community, "being made alive together with Christ" (*sunezōopoiēsen tō christō*, Eph. 2:5).<sup>42</sup> Because the Spirit is the one who unites us with Christ, this means the work of the Holy Spirit is inescapably social in nature. The very idea of spiritual growth is directed to both individuals and groups and is not something expected to occur in isolation from other believers.<sup>43</sup> Thiselton notes that for Paul the Holy Spirit is both "given to a chosen individual" and also "poured out either over the community of all God's people, or within the framework of God's purposes for the whole community."

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<sup>39</sup> See the discussion in Wilf Hildebrandt, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 69-72.

<sup>40</sup> David Peterson, *Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness* (Leicester, UK: Apollos, 1995), 40.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>42</sup> For an excellent survey of Paul's *sun-* compound use, see Constantine Campbell, *Paul and Union*, 228-236.

<sup>43</sup> Peterson, *Possessed by God*, 135.

This is particularly evident in 1 Corinthians 12, where gifts are “to each one individually, just as the Spirit chooses” (12:11 NRSV), but are means “for the common good” (12:7).<sup>44</sup>

The point made for Paul could equally be made in regard to Luke-Acts, as I will soon show.

Drawing on this Scriptural tradition, Reformed theology has also historically emphasized the social nature of sanctification. At times this is manifest in certain patterns of speech that implicitly drive a social theology of the Spirit, even if the connection is not always explicitly made. For example, Calvin speaks of the Spirit being poured out “not for any other purpose except that... we might *all be converted together* to be the people of God [emphasis added].”<sup>45</sup> The Church is “bound together by the one doctrine and the one Spirit of Christ,”<sup>46</sup> and believers are “participants in his spirit... For the spirit of the Lord has reposed on Christ... in order that we all may draw from his fullness and receive grace.”<sup>47</sup> For Calvin, sanctification flows from our corporate union with Christ made possible through the Holy Spirit, though he does not often pause to highlight the social nature of this reality. Despite this shortcoming, his insights, along with those of other early reformers, are preserved in the confessions. Thus the Heidelberg Catechism invites congregations to affirm in question 53 that the Holy Spirit “has been given to me personally,” while equally affirming in question 53 that “the Son of God through his Spirit and Word... gathers, protects, and preserves for himself a community chosen for

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<sup>44</sup> Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit*, 71.

<sup>45</sup> John Calvin, *Sermons on the Saving Work of Christ*, ed. and trans. Leroy Nixon (Hertfordshire, UK: Evangelical Press and Services, 1950), 263.

<sup>46</sup> John Calvin, “Reply to Sadoletto,” in *A Reformation Debate: Sadoletto’s Letter to the Genevans and Calvin’s Reply*, ed. John C. Olin (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 62.

<sup>47</sup> John Calvin, *Instruction in Faith (1537)*, trans. and ed. Paul T. Fuhrmann (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 43.



eternal life.”<sup>48</sup> In Reformed theology the work of the Spirit on individuals toward sanctification and union with Christ is balanced with the fact that the Church as a community is properly the object of this pneumatological work of union.

I highlight the sociality of the Spirit’s work as a first step toward establishing the link between norms and the work of the Holy Spirit. Even granting that the identity received in justification has social consequences, particularly in terms of the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, justification remains a decidedly individual phenomenon where individual persons receive the new identity in Christ. Sanctification, on the other hand, certainly pertains to individual persons, insofar as individual Christians are the ones sanctified, but the social nature of this sanctification is central. This suggests that a proper immanent term for considering the supervenient work of the Spirit must be primarily social in nature, just as identity, the immanent term for justification, had to be primarily personal in nature and only secondarily social insofar as identity is established in relation.

To further establish the link between norms and the work of the Spirit, we must attend to the pneumatology of Luke-Acts, paying particular attention first to the curious Lucan link between the laying of hands and reception of the Holy Spirit, and second to the two modes of action for the Holy Spirit. Three times in Acts, Luke links the laying of hands with reception of the Holy Spirit, when Peter and John visit the fledgling church in Samaria (Acts 8:4-19), when Ananias laid hands on Paul to cure his blindness and welcome him to the Church (Acts 9:17), and when Paul visited the Corinthian church (Acts 19:1-7). While the laying of hands in these pericopes is certainly not intended to

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<sup>48</sup> *The Heidelberg Catechism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Faith Alive Christian Resources, 1975).

suggest that baptism in the Spirit depends on certain fixed rights,<sup>49</sup> it is nevertheless associated with a legitimate “transfer” of the Spirit, though this is an exceptional occurrence.<sup>50</sup> Because reception of the Spirit occurs in various ways in Acts, these passages should not be interpreted as indicating that baptism in the Holy Spirit is consequent upon particular apostolic contact or that it is always subsequent to conversion rather than simultaneous with faith. Rather, given that these examples all occurred at decisive moments to converts from missionary expansion into Samaria, to the apostle Paul who would lead the gentile church, and to the gentiles at Corinth, it is reasonable to agree with Lampe when he sees in the laying of hands an expression of “fellowship and solidarity,”<sup>51</sup> “association” and “personal contact,”<sup>52</sup> and a sort of commissioning that “takes the particular form of the association with the missionary, apostolic, ministry of new members to join the work.”<sup>53</sup> The occasion for this solidarity is the need for mutual recognition of the apostolic validity of the Samaritan church, the Gentile church, and the Jewish church at Jerusalem. Thus, in Acts the laying of hands is only “secondarily an effective symbol of the gift of the Spirit.”<sup>54</sup> These unique instances demonstrate both that “manifestations linked with the reception of the Holy Spirit... constituted corporate rather than individual experiences,”<sup>55</sup> to quote Eckhard Schnabel, and that reciprocal-recognition by Jew and Samaritan of joint participation in the fellowship of believers was

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<sup>49</sup> The case is convincingly made in C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, volume 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 412-413.

<sup>50</sup> Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary. Volume 2 – 3:1-14:28* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 1528.

<sup>51</sup> G. W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the spirit: A Study in the Doctrine of Baptism and Confirmation in the New Testament and the Fathers* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1951), 70.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>55</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 412.

so significant that the Spirit operated in such an unusual fashion to facilitate such recognition between parts of the one Church.

There are two modes of action for the Spirit in Luke-Acts, which can be labeled “invasive irruptions,” and “complementary influence.” Accounts of invasive irruptions depict the Spirit dramatically acting on the historical stage in an unmediated manner.

Accounts of complementary influence show the Spirit working concurrently with a human person such that this person becomes the mediator of the Spirit’s work.<sup>56</sup>

Language is important for both of these categories. The first example of an invasive irruption is found at Pentecost, with a major emphasis of the first appearance of the Spirit being speaking in tongues (Acts 2:1-13). Throughout the books of Luke and Acts and building upon Old Testament depictions of Spirit-empowered prophetic speech, complementary influence particularly emphasizes the Spirit’s role in guiding what Christians will say (Luke 12:12, Acts 4:8, 6:10, 13:9, 21:4).<sup>57</sup> Accounts of complementary influence are also associated with the key Lucan phrases “full of the Holy Spirit” and “filled with the Holy Spirit.” As James Shelton notes, “the contexts for both expressions reveal Luke’s interest in inspired speaking,” even though “filled with the Holy Spirit” more often explicitly denotes “the empowering of an individual on a specific occasion to speak authoritatively.” Those who are full of the Holy Spirit are still those

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<sup>56</sup> I draw the distinction from Gonzalo Haya-Prats, *Empowered Believers: The Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts*, ed. Paul Elbert, trans. Scott A. Ellington (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), 72. In discussing complementary influence, Haya-Prats does not deploy a non-contrastive account of transcendence, instead attributing “primacy” to “the person that acts” and the role of “complementary cause” to the Spirit, as if the more clearly human the action is, the less directly the Spirit can be involved. The non-contrastive account developed in chapter 2 allows me to instead propose that accounts of the complementary influence of the Spirit reveal acts that are fully human and also fully the work of the Spirit, who is entirely transcendent to human agency while simultaneously fully immanent within it.

<sup>57</sup> There are analogues here with the other synoptic gospels. See Mark 12:36, 13:11 and Matthew 10:20.

divinely commissioned to proclaim the gospel.<sup>58</sup> Taken together, these two varieties of the Holy Spirit's work suggest a powerful connection in Luke-Acts between the Holy Spirit and language.<sup>59</sup>

With these exegetical points in place, I can now connect the scriptural account of the Spirit's work with Hector's pneumatology that was presented in chapter 3. Hector links theological language to the work of the Holy Spirit, which circulates through the normative assessment that determines whether concept use carries on a precedent trajectory.<sup>60</sup> By this account, the work of the Spirit is fundamentally social, which fits the Old Testament and Pauline depictions of the Spirit's work. Hector also treats language use and therefore the Spirit's work as linked to the mutual recognition by which a speaker recognizes someone as an authority in speaking, and then from that authority seeks recognition of the legitimacy of the new speaker's speech act.<sup>61</sup> In Luke-Acts, the unusual phenomenon of the laying of hands resulting in reception of the Spirit was in order to ensure the Jerusalem church's recognition of God's work among the Samaritans and Gentiles, as well as to facilitate the recognition by the Samaritans and Gentiles of their unity with Jewish Christians. Finally, Hector compellingly argues that language is norm-laden (and this stands regardless of where one lands on his claims about the non-metaphysical nature of his account). If language is norm-laden, and if the Spirit's work both in its irruptive and complementary forms can so closely be linked to language, then

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<sup>58</sup> James B. Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1991), 137.

<sup>59</sup> Of course, one could easily make a similar connection between language and Johaninne pneumatology (John 14:26, 16:13).

<sup>60</sup> Hector, *Metaphysics*, 56, 61.

<sup>61</sup> "In using a concept, one intends one's own usage to be recognizable as such by those whom one recognizes as users of the concept, and one intends this by trying to use it in the same way as certain precedents." Ibid., 63.

the Spirit's work must also be linked with norms more broadly considered, especially given the widespread New Testament emphasis on the Holy Spirit as a basis for normed ethical actions, or what I will call virtuous actions.

For both Hector and Luke, Spirit-empowered language cannot be divorced from the broad use of language throughout society. In the account of Pentecost in Acts, the languages spoken by the power of the Spirit were not distinct from common tongues, as is evident from the fact that the crowd recognized the words spoken by the Apostles as in their native tongues (Acts 2:8). The Spirit-empowered speech of the early Christians at Pentecost was thus a grace-enabled transformation of human language that elevated such language above its natural capacity. As such, Pentecost must be seen not only as a restoration of the intended state of creation through the undoing of the dispersion of languages at Babel that was a consequence of sin (Gen. 11:1-9), but also as a transfiguration of this original state by elevating such language through the eschatological impact of grace during the "last days" (Acts 2:17). To turn to Hector's more philosophical account, it must be made clear that the Christ-initiated and Spirit-enabled trajectories of precedent language use draw upon broader vocabulary, patterns of speech, and conceptual frameworks from society at large, albeit in a sense that transfigures such concepts and speech. Simply put, there can be no complete divide between the order of creation and the order of redemption in terms of theological language, which is but another way of pointing out that God's common grace must be operative in some fashion throughout all human society for such a connection to be possible.

The same structural relation between norms in society and Spirit-enabled action exists in all areas of Christian life, be it in the realm of language, virtuous action, or liturgical worship. Virtuous action can be oriented by norms within the created order toward a good end, though the theological virtues will always exceed the capabilities latent within the created order. Worship follows certain liturgical patterns that are learned as part of the community, but even worship draws upon the created order both in its constitutive materials such as the bread and wine of Eucharist,<sup>62</sup> and in its patterns of speech drawn from vernacular languages.<sup>63</sup> Any normed activity within the Church, therefore, draws in part upon an always-prior set of norms within the created order. So while it must be stressed with great force that it is not a social impulse but Christ who unites the Church through his Spirit,<sup>64</sup> we must be careful to equally stress that the Spirit's work to unite the Church is always also a work to re-unite creation, to restore it to its Edenic state, and at last to transfigure it beyond even the glory of Eden. We never move from created language and knowledge to the order of redemption by powers latent within creation itself. However, having been illuminated by the Father's self-revelation in the Son as received through our Spirit-enabled understanding, we can stand within the order of redemption and see the created order as it truly is: an order oriented toward redemption and designed for communion with Father, Son, and Spirit.

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<sup>62</sup> Helpful here is Schmemmann's suggestion that the Edenic Eucharistic priesthood was designed such that Adam and Eve would be "offering of the world to God, and in this offering... receiv[ing] the gift of life." Creation from its start was oriented toward communion with God, as is evident in the fact that basic material elements are central to the Eucharistic meal. Alexander Schmemmann, *Sacraments and Orthodoxy* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1965), 17.

<sup>63</sup> This remains the case even for a Latin or Greek liturgy, given that certain historical patterns of speech drawn from the created world are retained within liturgy.

<sup>64</sup> Barth, *Dogmatics*, IV.3.2, 682.

To use the proper technical term, the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life is sanctification, a work that follows necessarily from justification and that is rooted in faith.<sup>65</sup> All who are justified by grace through faith stand equally approved before God, recipients of a new identity in Christ. Sanctification must be distinguished from justification because, in contradistinction to justification, in sanctification there is no change in status. While there is no progress in justification because the justified stand equally before God, not all are equally sanctified. Despite this distinction, justification cannot be dissociated from sanctification as if these two aspects of redemption were two unrelated or divisible acts. Sanctification must be rooted in justification, and justification must result in sanctification.<sup>66</sup> The necessary unity between the Son's foundational work in justification and the Spirit's work in sanctification was initially rooted in a desire to resist enthusiast claims to have visions that contradicted the Biblical text.<sup>67</sup> In later Reformed theology we see the unity amid distinction mandated by a theology of appropriations, where the Father's work in creation, the Son's work in redemption, and the Spirit's work in creation are neither divided from one another, nor exclusively the

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<sup>65</sup> The Reformation principle of *sola fide* demands that sanctification also be rooted in and developed through faith. This connection between faith and sanctification gestures toward the relationship between the social imaginary and norms. For a thorough treatment of the connection between faith and sanctification, see G. C. Berkouwer, *Studies in Dogmatics: Faith and Sanctification*, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1952).

<sup>66</sup> The distinction and relation between justification and sanctification here described is widely attested throughout Reformed theology. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology Volume 3* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1982), 108, 213; Calvin, *Institutes*, III.11.6; Ursinus, *Commentary*, 227; Wollebius, *Compendium*, XXXI.13; Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics vol. 3*, 570-572; Kuyper, *Holy Spirit*, 440-447; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 530.

<sup>67</sup> I. John Hesselink, "Pneumatology," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Henry J. Baron, Judith J. Guder, Randi H. Lundell, and Gerrit W. Sheeres (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2009), 300; Thomas F. Torrance, *Kingdom and Church: A Study in the Theology of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1956), 97-99.

work of one divine person.<sup>68</sup> Thus, the work of the Spirit must be properly related to both the created order and to the work of the Son.

Though this has been underemphasized in the Reformed tradition, the work of the Spirit in redemption proper is in harmony with the divine work of common grace operative in creation. I have argued that this means that there is a created analogue<sup>69</sup> to the Spirit's work in sanctification. This created analogue can either be the location of God's concurrent work of common grace that finds its *telos* in the redemption of the faithful, or it can be a site of malformation where human beings refuse that same *telos* and divide the order of creation and redemption. It should be clear by now that I consider norms to be the created analogue a theology of the economy must seek. This follows from the relation between norms, identity, and the social imaginary. A social imaginary establishes the symbolic framework within which any trajectory of human action is

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<sup>68</sup> So Bavinck insists that when we appropriate creation to the Father, redemption to the Son, and sanctification to the Spirit, we must acknowledge, first, that each person is active in all three parts, but also, second, that the appropriation is fitting insofar as creation is ordered toward redemption and subsequent sanctification in much the same way that the Father begets the Son, and with the Son spirates the Spirit. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* vol. 3, 571; cf. Wollebius, *Compendium*, XXXI.3. This is not an entirely novel development. Bullinger, for example, used appropriations to distinguish in a similar fashion the Father's work in creation, the Son's incarnation, suffering, death, and resurrection, and our "sins... forgiven in the Holy Ghost." The same basic point is there, though there is not yet a completely developed distinction between justification as grounded in the redemption found in Christ and sanctification through the work of the Spirit. Heinrich Bullinger, *The Decades of Henry Bullinger. The Fourth Decade*, ed. Thomas Harding (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1851), 326.

<sup>69</sup> It must be clear that the Spirit's work is not here reduced to the preservation of certain norms but rather that (a) it is analogous to these norms, and (b) these norms are in small part the immanent term for the Spirit's work in sanctification. The Holy Spirit's work in sanctification is ultimately mystery, meaning that the particular mechanism by which such a transformation is made cannot be fully known. As Kuyper notes, the ineffability of sanctification is an important restraint upon any "human effort to make oneself holy or holier." As long as the mechanism for sanctification lies beyond our comprehension, we can never attempt to work our way to perfection on our own. Nevertheless, this emphasis on epistemological humility must be held in balance with the equal principle that any redemptively significant transformation toward sanctification brought about through norms operative in the economy must be spoken of as concurrently the gracious work of God. Kuyper, *Holy Spirit*, 435.



intelligible. One's identity then establishes the set of commitments that determines which trajectories of action one is able to take. Through norms, an individual is reinforced in the pursuit of particular sets of action through the pre-reflective and intersubjective influence of others. Thus, concurrent divine work through norms can be properly appropriated to the Spirit not only for the scriptural reasons attested above, but because norms serve to complete trajectories that issue from a social imaginary and are actualized within a particular identity. If norms must be considered coincident with the work of the triune God, then following the rule for speaking of appropriated divine works they are most fittingly works of the perfecting Spirit.

To avoid the error of Pelagianism, I must again remind the reader that I do not mean to imply that redemption emerges from norms in the created order. Redemption and sanctification are decidedly transcendent of the world as grace is to nature. Once the special grace of God is operative in sanctification, however, the human person is gradually brought to share in the perfect humanity of the incarnate Christ through union with him, and in this transformation the order of redemption perfects God's act in the order of creation, such that special grace is a fulfillment of the common grace within which creation is sustained. This means that under certain circumstances life in the world in general, and in the economy in particular, can contribute towards the redemptively significant transformation of believers, though certainly not in any meritorious sense. Common grace also works toward the sanctification of the elect insofar as all of creation and all of human civilization falls under the same divine providence that leads the Church to communion with the triune God, but God's work toward sanctification through common grace operative in creation depends upon the prior special grace of justification.

The Spirit works in sanctification to restore the image of God.<sup>70</sup> In terms of the created order, the development of capacities through the social imaginary discussed in chapter 5 partially constitutes the created basis for this restoration. Recall that Background capacities are the basis of seeing the world in a particular way and of recognizing particular institutional facts. The set of possible capacities is largely determined by the social imaginaries within which a subject interprets the world. Particular identities then contribute to the actualization of a specific subset of Background capacities, and these capacities are developed through their repeated use in practices that require habituated action along a particular trajectory maintained by norms. For these capacities to actually develop and transform a human being, normed action is essential.

The development of Background capacities is only a partial created term for the Spirit's work of sanctification. A complete account must also consider the virtues that are developed through interpersonal norms. To explain what I mean, I will draw on Alasdair MacIntyre's working definition for virtue:

A virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods.<sup>71</sup>

Note several significant aspects of this definition. First, virtues enable particular practices. By practices, MacIntyre intends any "socially established cooperative human activity" that strives toward intrinsic goods that are "partially definitive of that form of

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<sup>70</sup> Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 532.

<sup>71</sup> Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, third edition (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 191. MacIntyre treats this definition as a working definition, but insists that further conceptual clarifications are required to sufficiently grasp the notion of virtue.

activity.”<sup>72</sup> Virtues are developed within a social network demarcated and maintained by specific norms<sup>73</sup> that carry on precedent trajectories.<sup>74</sup> These networks themselves are determined in part by the goods toward which they are oriented. In the terminology I have been using, they are intelligible only within a particular imaginary.<sup>75</sup> Second, the successful development of virtue facilitates our achievement of the goods intrinsic to practices themselves. I will explain the significance of this fact momentarily. Third, virtues are acquired qualities. With Background capacities, they form a nexus of norm-influenced human qualities whose acquisition and growth is the created analogue for the Spirit’s work in sanctification to “infuse new qualities into the will,” to use the terminology of the Canons of Dort.<sup>76</sup> For this reason, MacIntyre’s definition of virtue must be slightly altered, such that virtues allow us to “obtain” rather than “achieve” internal goods. It is also preferable to speak of the reception of theological virtues, though this reception also is manifest in a progressive growth that remains dependent upon habituated action reinforced by norms. As agents operate according to these norms they grow in virtue, a redemptively significant growth that must be partly attributed to common grace and appropriated to the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>73</sup> In MacIntyre’s words, “A practice involves standards of excellence and obedience to rules as well as the achievement of goods.” Ibid., 190.

<sup>74</sup> MacIntyre is in clear agreement with my Hector-influenced depiction of norms as carrying on a chain of precedent uses when he claims that “To enter into a practice is to enter into a relationship not only with its contemporary practitioners, but also with those who have preceded us in the practice, particularly those whose achievements extended the reach of the practice to its present point.” Ibid., 194.

<sup>75</sup> MacIntyre uses the related and yet conceptually distinct notions of narrative, story, and tradition. The fundamental point of each of his terms is the same as the basic point of a social imaginary: human actions are intelligible only within a larger framework. The details, of course, diverge in many instances. Ibid., 204-225.

<sup>76</sup> *Canons of Dort*, III/IV.11. cf. Turretin, *Institutes*, Vol. 2, 17.1.4. Turretin claims that sanctification “consists in a change and renovation of nature itself (corrupted by original sin) by which depraved qualities and habits are cast out and good ones infused so that the man desists from evil acts and strives for good.”

The *telos* of all of God's work in *oikonomia* is to bring about communion between human beings and the Father, Son, and Spirit. The Spirit's distinctive role in sanctification is no different. Brunner puts the matter succinctly: The Holy Spirit's "first and decisive activity is this, that He makes Christ present to us."<sup>77</sup> Through our Spirit-enabled union to the Son whose presence we are increasingly aware of, Christians share in adoption and thereby also have communion with the Father in a manner analogous to the Son's communion with the Father (Eph. 1:5). The triune work of redemption must therefore be seen as the means participating in God's knowledge of God.<sup>78</sup> Communion is here orthodoxy in the sense of both right knowledge and right worship. The sanctifying work of the Spirit insures such communion is never merely orthodox though, insofar as sanctification results in virtuous actions, a life walking in the light of the Lord (Is. 2:5).<sup>79</sup> Our acquisition of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love in a partial degree through sanctification and then fully through glorification enables us to achieve the intrinsic good that is communion with God, a communion itself constitutive of the ecclesiological and redemptive-historical practices<sup>80</sup> within which virtue is obtained.

This treatment of the Spirit rounds out the expansion of Kevin Hector's pneumatology begun in chapter 3, so it would be prudent to pause to summarize the contours of the constructive development I have pursued. I am convinced that one of the significant contributions that Hector's *Theology without Metaphysics* makes is found in

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<sup>77</sup> Emil Brunner, *Dogmatics: Vol. 3 – The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation*, trans. David Cairns and T. H. L. Parker (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), 12. Brunner draws his insight from John 14-16.

<sup>78</sup> Thomas F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992), 116-117.

<sup>79</sup> Paul even treats this usual phrase as intersubstitutable with "walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16).

<sup>80</sup> I use MacIntyre's sense of the term, here, meaning that sanctification is social in its reliance on cooperative human and, I would add, concurrent divine action delimited by standards of excellence, here conformity to Christ.

its attempt to correlate theological discussion of Spirit-enabled language use with technical and concrete accounts of how language is actually learned and used. Tabling the question of metaphysics, I have attempted to affirm the basic method while developing it in four dimensions. First, I develop Hector's claim that "a concept just *is* a norm, in that a particular use is both normed by precedent uses and, in turn, norms subsequent uses."<sup>81</sup> If this is the case, then the simplest way that to expand Hector's proposal is to connect the Holy Spirit's work to norms in a more general sense, as I have done in this chapter. Though helpful in this context, I grant that this contribution is not a significant departure from Hector's own work. It relies almost entirely on his insights.

The second manner in which I have developed Hector's theology is to offer a more properly trinitarian correlation between accounts of human action in general and the work of God. This element begins to represent more of a departure from Hector's project, though I pointed out in chapter 3 where there were aspects of Hector's work that pointed in this direction, especially his correlation of justification and sanctification with identification and transformation.<sup>82</sup> If the Spirit works through norms, then the Father works through social imaginaries and the Son through identity. Besides offering a more clearly trinitarian account of language use, this development allows for a more comprehensive analysis of all norms in relation to other created realities through which God is acting. As a result, this creative development of Hector's insights allows for a more comprehensive deployment of his basic insight into the market, where three created realities can now become the focus of analysis instead of merely one.

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<sup>81</sup> Hector, *Metaphysics*, 105.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 235-6.

The trinitarian development of Hector's work that I pursued required me to develop his work in a third way by situating his discussion of norms within a broader theology of divine action deriving from a non-contrastive account of transcendence and drawing on classical accounts of concurrence and appropriations and on more contemporary discussions of supervenience. On my account, norms, identity, and social imaginaries are not only identified with the Spirit, the Son, and the Father, but they become the immanent terms of divine action. Though this connection begins to head in a direction that in the end may be incongruent with Hector's own (anti-)metaphysical commitments,<sup>83</sup> I believe it is indispensable to speak in these terms. Once we recognize that norms, identity, and social imaginaries are the immanent terms of God's coincident and supervenient action within the created order, it is possible to connect these immanent terms with God's work in the order of redemption. In short, these terms become the means by which God can bring about three dimensions of redemptively significant transformation by facilitating our return to God of right experience through orthopathy, right practices through orthopraxis, and right knowledge through orthodoxy, though again I remind the reader of the fundamentally interconnected and ultimately indivisible nature of these dimensions. In other words, speaking of concurrent divine action allows me to develop a theology of communion, where personal relationships with Father, Son, and Spirit emerge from grace-enabled mutual awareness and mutual interactions in knowledge and will, initiated by God through revelation, justification, and sanctification

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<sup>83</sup> It would take more analysis than space permits to determine whether or not this is the case. In short, I would note my suspicion that even if language does not correspond to the essence of a thing, the sorts of metaphysical moves I am making require me to make claims about the divine essence that would seemingly undermine Hector's therapy and still fall subject to the concerns raised by Marion, Caputo, and others.

and returned by humans to God through a life of orthodoxy, orthopathy, and orthopraxis.<sup>84</sup>

This connection between the immanent terms of divine action and communion results in one final creative expansion of Hector's project, one that as far as I can tell lacks a parallel in Hector's own work. If God works through norms, identity, and social imaginaries, it becomes possible to speak of transformation made possible through these immanent terms, or of human refusal of this transformation. While Hector quite helpfully gives an account of how human talk about God must be a participation in God's talk about God, I fail to see where he connects this claim with a theology of grace, so that any human participation in God's talk about God also results in transformation of the speaker by grace. In terms of the current project and its theology of common and special grace, and having made the generalizing move from language to human actions in general, we can now more clearly say what it means to participate in both the life of God and in a market economy. When a market is constructed so as to allow for human norms, social imaginaries, and identity to become more open to being the objects of concurrent divine action, redemptively significant transformation can bring about communion such that participation in the market can also in an analogous and anticipatory<sup>85</sup> sense be participation in the life of God. I see this development as my most substantive move beyond the groundwork laid by Hector and as the full conclusion of my theology of the economy.

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<sup>84</sup> Here I believe I have finally fully connected the account of communion developed in chapter 2 in dialogue with Owen, Chirico, and Hodgson to the technical apparatus developed in chapter 3.

<sup>85</sup> I say antitipative because a full union between participation in life in the created order and participation in the life of God will only occur at the eschaton.

Now that my full theological account is complete, and now that the connection between norms and the work of the Holy Spirit has been clearly elaborated, one final task remains. I must now consider whether the model-influenced norms operative within the economy, a particular subset of creation, are such that they facilitate practices that make the realization of the intrinsic good of communion obtainable, or whether they tend to resist the divine work of common grace that unites the divine acts of creation and redemption toward this final beatific end.

### **Norms, Virtue, and Economic Models**

Some economists are aware that norms can affect the economy, and some even consider the question of the development of virtue through economic action. For example, studies have found that when there is a social norm against receiving welfare payments, people are more likely to take low quality jobs to avoid unemployment and the social stigma of welfare payments. When welfare is socially accepted, people are less likely to take low quality jobs and unemployment rises.<sup>86</sup> Despite the fact that some studies exist treating the issue of social norms, many of the mainstream economic models taught in classrooms and textbooks neglect these fundamental aspects of human action. Instead, these textbooks begin with microeconomic analysis that treats individual consumer preference functions and budget constraints giving rise to demand as a byproduct of an optimization problem. Texts then move on to consider equilibrium as a result of the convergence of aggregate demand functions with production functions for firms.<sup>87</sup> Mainstream neoclassical models depicting rationality treat consumers, firms, and

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<sup>86</sup> Basu, *Political Economy*, 76.

<sup>87</sup> Each of the five best-selling microeconomics textbooks on Amazon.com as of January 2016 follow this standard mindset with limited variation. Two only present consumption as a



investors as utility-maximizing individuals whose preferences are exogenous to the model – meaning that the model does not consider how preferences arise.<sup>88</sup> The notion of exogenous preferences is itself problematic in that models do not consider what can be called preference-changing norms that ultimately shape consumer preferences.<sup>89</sup> As theologians like to point out, this means that economic models are often unable to account for the role that marketing and advertizing can play in shaping preferences by instilling new social norms in consumers. There is a deeper problem with this approach to

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standard utility maximization problem within a budget constraint: N. Gregory Mankiw, *Principles of Microeconomics*, seventh edition (Mason, OH: South-Western College Publishers, 2014), 435-460; Robert S. Pindyck and Daniel L. Rubinfeld, *Microeconomics*, eighth edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2012), 67-109. McConnell, Brue and Flynn have added a chapter on behavioral economics to the twentieth edition of their text in the consumer behavior section, something previously missing. Despite this, there is still no viable account of norms. Campbell McConnell, Stanley Brue and Sean Flynn, *Microeconomics*, twentieth edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2014). Hubbard and O'Brien do consider fairness as interpreted through behavioral economics, and preferences are treated as endogenous to the economy by appeal to Becker's analysis of social influences on utility. However, insofar as preferences are still determinative of consumer choices, there is still no role for norms. R. Glenn Hubbard and Anthony Patrick O'Brien, *Microeconomics*, fifth edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2014), 304-349. Krugman and Wells qualify the standard optimization problem by noting that bounded rationality, risk aversion, and questions about fairness may change results. However, even in the discussion of fairness, nothing approaches a viable account of social norms. Paul Krugman and Robin Wells, *Microeconomics*, third edition (London: Worth Publishers, 2012), 243-316. There are, of course, exceptions to this trend in textbooks. Notable for its attention to the connection between advertizing and preferences, the social embeddedness of consumer behavior, and the ethical analysis that must be linked to consumer behavior is: Neva Goodwin, Julie A. Nelson, Frank Ackerman, and Thomas Weisskopf, *Microeconomics in Context*, second edition (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2009), 251-283. Equally notable is a microeconomic textbook that begins with institutional design and social interactions, and that considers social preferences in the consumer behavior chapter: Samuel Bowles, *Microeconomics: Behavior, Institutions, and Evolution* (New York: Russell Sage, 2004). Neither of these latter examples were in Amazon's top fifty best selling microeconomics books.

<sup>88</sup> Nancy Fox reminds us that this does not mean that economists have entirely neglected the question of the origin of preferences, pointing to Veblen, Leibenstein, and Galbraith. Though her point is well taken, it is still important to recognize that these figures are marginalized from much of the mainstream discussion precisely for such questions. Long and Fox, *Calculated*, 55.

<sup>89</sup> I draw the term from Basu, who suggests that there are three economically-significant varieties of norms: (a) rationality-limiting: "a norm that stops us from doing certain things or choosing certain options, irrespective of how much utility that thing or option gives us"; (b) preference-changing norms: norms that may influence preferences for consumption, investment, or working; (c) "equilibrium-selection": a norm that "helps people *select* an equilibrium when more than one equilibrium is available." Basu, *Political Economy*, 72-3.

preferences: treating preferences as exogenous helps to prevent many economists (there are certainly exceptions) from seriously engaging the development and social evolution of economic systems.<sup>90</sup>

Substantial as the problems facing many economic models are in the area of exogenous preferences, an even larger problem is found in the underlying assumption that rationality can be equated with utility maximization. The problem has been well known for decades, at least since Amartya Sen's seminal paper "Rational Fools." In the paper Sen distinguishes between sympathy and commitment, where sympathy refers to "concern for others [that] directly affects one's own welfare," and commitment to a concern for others that does not improve one's welfare but which is rooted in a moral commitment.<sup>91</sup> Sympathy may drive someone to give money to a beggar on the side of the road to prevent the discomfort arising from the beggar's pleading look, while commitment may compel that same person to give anonymously to support natural disaster relief. The difference here is one of motivation. In a case of sympathy at least part of the motive is the desire to alleviate one's own discomfort of suffering. In

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<sup>90</sup> The contribution in terms of preferences is merely part of a larger problem treated by Herman Daly and John Cobb, who argue that, while economics has never fully neglected the social and historical evolution of markets – the authors point to Hegel, Marx, and Marshall here – by and large economists only seek models that explain current behavior. Cobb and Daly suggest that this arises from the discipline's attempt to be scientific, modeled on the success of physics, which largely seeks static laws, and not biology, with its emphasis on evolution. Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr., *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 25-32. It must be granted that certain approaches that have grown in significance since the time of Daly and Cobb's writing do emphasize such development. This is particularly the case in terms of evolutionary economics. For a good introduction to the subdiscipline of evolutionary economics, see: Geoffrey M. Hodgson, "A Philosophical Perspective on Contemporary Evolutionary Economics," in *The Elgar Companion to Recent Economic Methodology*, eds. John B. Davis and D. Wade Hands (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2011), 299-318.

<sup>91</sup> Amartya K. Sen, "Rational Fools: A Critique of the Behavioral Foundations of Economic Theory," *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 6.4 (Summer, 1977), 326.

commitment, there is no such self-interested welfare motive. Utility maximization alone cannot account for commitment, a major flaw in the standard account of rationality.

One can make a utilitarian objection to Sen's distinction by arguing that there is still some implicit satisfaction found in "doing the right thing" such that all decisions still boil down to utility maximization. Perhaps with this in mind, Sen later strengthened his objection to the standard account of rationality, distinguishing between welfare, goal, and choice. He claims that self-interested behavior has three components: "Self-centered welfare" indicates that a person's utility depends only upon her own consumption, "self-welfare goal" indicates that a self-interested agent has the goal of maximizing utility, and "self-goal choice" indicates that a person's choices are guided by her own goals.<sup>92</sup> A self-interested individual therefore acts in such a way that goals and choices are joined with and subsumed to self-welfare maximization. Commitment, on the other hand, drives one "wedge" between welfare and choice and another between goal and choice.<sup>93</sup> The wedge between welfare and choice is fairly easy to understand if commitment motivates actions that provide no welfare benefit. This is the wedge that the standard utilitarian objection challenges. Even if the standard objection holds, which I doubt,<sup>94</sup> the second wedge between goal and choice must be taken into account.

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<sup>92</sup> Amartya Sen, *On Ethics and Economics* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 2007), 80.

<sup>93</sup> Sen, "Rational", 329; Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 188-193.

<sup>94</sup> Ultimately, this objection is not compelling insofar as it seems to reduce the claim that all decisions maximize utility to the point of a tautology. Furthermore, as Hausman and McPherson helpfully note, the objection is predicated on a fallacious conflation of being self-interested and acting on one's own preferences. Even if a distinction between sympathy and commitment does not prove that all decisions do not derive from preferences, we still must affirm the distinction as a means of differentiating between preferences that are fundamentally other-regarding, and preferences that are self-regarding. Daniel M. Hausman and Michael S. McPherson, *Economic Analysis and Moral Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 80.

Sen's second wedge entails that commitment can cause someone to make a choice contrary to his own goals, therefore driving a wedge between choice and goal. Social norms (of which moral norms are a subset) would be one important determiner of goals outside of individual choice. Hans Bernhard Schmid has critiqued this position, claiming that such a thing is impossible according to John Searle's notion of "conditions of satisfaction." A condition of satisfaction is the requirement that must be fulfilled for me to have done what I intended to do. Schmid suggests that if a person intends something, then he must have chosen his goal, his own conditions of satisfaction.<sup>95</sup> I think Schmid overstates the case, insofar as someone can, through commitment, find herself in a situation where she intends to act according to the commitment setting conditions of satisfaction upon that intention, namely, the willingness to do whatever that commitment entails. What the commitment entails, however, may not be set by the agent, but by some "other." Thus, to intend to adhere to a particular commitment is to intend to act according to some external standard that will have its own conditions of satisfaction, its own *telos*. Despite objections, I consider Sen's distinction between commitment and sympathy a helpful challenge to standard economic theory, one that highlights fundamental flaws in dominant economic theories of rationality.

Standard economic theory's failure to incorporate a principle of commitment has three theologically significant consequences. The first consequence is that models lacking room for commitment reinforce self-interested behavior.<sup>96</sup> This is so because such models

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<sup>95</sup> Hans Bernhard Schmid, "Beyond Self-Goal Choice: Amartya Sen's Analysis of the Structure of Commitment and the Role of Shared Desires," in *Rationality and Commitment*, eds. Fabienne Peter and Hans Bernhard Schmid (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 214-215.

<sup>96</sup> Some Christian ethicists do not see this as problematic. Thus Nankivell argues that a "competitive, acquisitive instinct" has been fundamental to human life as far back as we can historically explore, so it would be pointless to attempt to purge human nature of this instinct

convey to those who are aware of them the fact that self-interest is not only a norm but also the only rational basis for human action. As discussed in the example of the discontinuity effect at the beginning of the chapter, when self-interested behavior is understood as acceptable and even normative, economic agents are more likely to act in self-interested ways. (This may partially explain the phenomenon discussed in chapter 4 where economics students tend to manifest more self-interested behavior than their counterparts in other disciplines.) Given that proper formation in sanctification requires the development of Background capacities that allow us to act in an other-regarding manner, loving our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:39 and pars., Gal. 5:14), this shortcoming is prone to putting out the Spirit's fire and resisting the work of sanctification in the economy.

The second consequence of economic models' lack of treating commitment is even more substantial. Because any internal motivation other than utility preferences is eliminated from most economic models of behavior, markets constructed with these models in mind typically resort to external motivation through incentives that attempt to restructure preferences. This use of incentives tends to eliminate internal motivations oriented toward intrinsic goods through the crowding out effect and the spillover effect, something hugely problematic from the standpoint of orthopraxis because the

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now. Instead, we should seek to build institutions that make the most of it. Owen Nankivell, *All Good Gifts: A Christian View of the Affluent Society* (London: Epworth, 1978), 63. Even if this were the case, and there were no Edenic state of other-regarding love prior to a historical fall, theological ethics should not be oriented toward the past, but rather the eschatological future. The theological task is to call the believer to a life beyond the natural capabilities latent within creation, that is, to call the believer to life as a new creation. Here one could appeal to the invisible hand as something bringing a morally positive outcome from self-interested individual motives. John Stapleford points out that even Adam Smith in his advocacy of the invisible hand assumed that responsible people would "'constrain' themselves in 'the pursuit of self-interest.'" Increasing self-interest through norms would eventually result in a magnitude of self-interest to which even Smith would object. John E. Stapleford, *Bulls, Bears, and Golden Calves: Applying Christian Ethics in Economics*, second edition (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2009), 42.

development of virtue depends upon the pursuit of goods intrinsic to a practice itself, whether this practice is economic like working, or theological like living in communion with the triune God.<sup>97</sup> In short, not only do incentives make the development of virtues in the economy problematic through the crowding out effect, they may also make the development of the theological virtues problematic through the spillover effect. As the sociology of religion approach is prone to notice, a major problem with the contemporary economy is that it tends to eliminate economic agents' recognition of the intrinsic good of a religious practice or belief, instead substituting an extrinsic good as the basis of religious belief and practice.<sup>98</sup> This is why critiques of utility-maximizing *homo economicus* by a theological approach such as personalist economics can never be quite adequate: the problem is not merely one of orthodoxy, that such models do not truly represent the human being created in the image of God. The problem is fundamentally one of orthopraxis, that when such models are used as the basis for constructing a market and economic interactions therein, the market will undermine the development of virtue, no longer conforming to the divine work of common grace that could be operative within it. The very problem with the spillover effect is that it eliminates any internal drive toward intrinsic goods other than money, but God is the highest intrinsic good, so

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<sup>97</sup> D. Stephen Long, perhaps underemphasizing the point, writes: "Because the success and advancement of capitalist societies have little if any bearing on the relation of the internal goods of participants in those societies to their achievement of external goods, such societies make the exercise of virtue difficult." Long, *Divine Economy*, 230.

<sup>98</sup> Vincent Miller suggests that the sociological claim that religion is becoming therapeutic is partly a result of advertizing attempting to convince the consumer that she is missing something. Here a false religion seeking to facilitate human ability to cope in the face of an ever-receding loss of intrinsic goods is presented as a substitute for well-grounded theological community that is itself an intrinsic good. Vincent Miller, *Consuming*, 85-87. Bruce Rittenhouse argues that consumption is an effort at "self-valuation," a pursuit of material goods as a religious response to the threat of death and loss of meaning. Here, the religious impulse remains, but material goods that are extrinsic to true religion become the perceived source of satisfying the religious ground motive. Rittenhouse, *Shopping*, 147-152.

Christian life suffers. One truly cannot love both God and mammon (Luke 16:13 and pars.). Here the economics as religion approach is invaluable in its insistence that the modern economy can fundamentally change the way that religious subjects understand and practice their religions.

The third and final shortcoming is the fact that a shortage of models that can analyze commitment results in the lack of an adequate economic framework for considering whether market structures enhance or impede economic agents' abilities to develop and receive virtue. The question of virtue is not entirely unknown in economic research, though it has certainly been peripheral to mainstream discussions. There are two influential theses regarding the relationship between virtues and the market. The "doux commerce" thesis claims that virtues are encouraged to flourish through commerce, while the "self-destruction thesis" disagrees, claiming that the market undermines the very virtues that are needed for its proper functioning.<sup>99</sup> Graafland argues compellingly that both theses are too simplistic. He surveys seventy-three economic studies that consider whether the market enables or hinders the development of virtue and finds three conclusions that are pertinent for our study: (a) we have not reached conclusive empirical answers; (b) though theoretical studies are divided evenly between the doux commerce and self-destruction thesis, empirical studies are far more pessimistic, with two-thirds of them reaching negative conclusions about the relationship between virtue and the free market; (c) individual virtues may respond differently to markets (i.e. diligence seems to

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<sup>99</sup> See Johan J. Graafland, *The Market, Happiness, and Solidarity: A Christian Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 108. Among the authors considered in chapter 1 in the legitimizing approach, Deirdre McCloskey most explicitly relies on the *doux commerce* thesis. McCloskey, *Virtues*, 30-31.

improve, but the vice of envy also increases).<sup>100</sup> Graafland's analysis leads me to believe that it may be possible to construct markets that are at least more amenable to the development of virtues, but this task will only be possible when fundamental economic models of human behavior move beyond depictions of self-interested pursuit of preferences or utility, instead considering norms, evaluating the endogenous origin of preferences, and treating the development of virtues. While economic actions within a market oriented toward the development of virtue obviously would not be coterminous with sanctification, they would allow us to construct a market in the created order that has a transcendent *telos* only fulfilled in the order of redemption.

Gary Becker, himself an advocate of utility maximizing theories of human behavior that fail to attend to the idea of commitment,<sup>101</sup> may have developed a partial foundation for the economic analysis of virtues in his notion of personal capital and social capital. Both ideas treat preferences as endogenous to models (i.e. determined internal to the models themselves),<sup>102</sup> with personal capital referring to the manner in which past personal decisions may influence present preferences, and social capital referring to how past and present actions by peers in a social network may influence present personal preferences.<sup>103</sup> Essentially, personal and social capital function as a sort of feedback loop. An economic agent acts at a particular time based on a particular utility function that is, in part, derived from the personal and social capital stocks. The action taken can affect these capital stocks, which in turn modifies the utility function, resulting

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<sup>100</sup> Graafland, *Market, Happiness, and Solidarity*, 132.

<sup>101</sup> "This book retains the assumption that individuals behave so as to maximize utility while extending the definition of individual preferences." Gary S. Becker, *Accounting for Tastes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 4.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.



in new actions being taken in the next time interval, leading to yet another set of modifications to the capital stock, and so forth *ad infinitum*. Thus, unlike many other dominant economic models, Becker is able to speak of something akin to a social norm that results in the development of particular qualities within an economic agent. If his theory of rationality was modified to allow for a notion like commitment, then social capital stocks perhaps could even treat the development or reception of virtues. However, without any notion of commitment, the reduction of rationality to preference maximization – even preference maximization influenced by the preferences of others in society – makes it impossible to treat the development of virtue through commitment to an intrinsic good, a goal chosen by God and not the self, that eventually transforms the will and bends it toward a higher end.<sup>104</sup>

In point of fact and despite its potential to be transformed and put to better use, Becker's model of human agency illustrates the full set of problems considered in the second half of this project. Becker's economic work is perhaps the most invasive example of economists deploying a marginalist-influenced economic imaginary in all domains of human life to answer a wide range of problems.<sup>105</sup> Therefore, Becker's work

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<sup>104</sup> For a parallel analysis that contrasts Augustine with Milton Friedman, see Cavanaugh, *Being Consumed*, 7-15.

<sup>105</sup> Consider, for example, Becker's treatment of the family. He interprets altruism as a preference where altruists receive a "psychic income in place of money income." In other words, altruists do not act out of commitment, but out of preference and utility maximization. Becker analyzes the family and the market, concluding that the marketplace is an inefficient place for altruism, while a family is an efficient place for altruism. In the marketplace, rational agents can calculate that making direct cash transfers to those in need is more efficient than providing goods at below cost to those in need, so direct philanthropic giving will predominate and altruism will apparently be absent. In families, however, "marriage markets" match partners whose preferences are to be benefactors or beneficiaries. Investment in children's human capital through altruism actually promotes the prestige of the family as the child becomes more successful. For these reasons, Becker claims that there is a market basis grounded in utility maximization and efficiency for altruism in the family, but not in the marketplace. Gary S. Becker, *A Treatise on the Family*, enlarged edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 299-302. The

contributes in a significant way to the heteropathic depersonalizing found in many social imaginaries influenced by instrumentalist marginalist logic, a depersonalizing trend that undermines the general revelation of God in creation. Becker's work also lacks space for a rigorous conception of identity. As John Davis notes, Becker still has no adequate basis for individuation insofar as the agent in Becker's model who invests in various forms of social and personal capital is still merely a collection of preferences, preferences that Becker must arbitrarily assume are immutable in order to allow for reidentification. More than this, there is no reason why we cannot imagine multiple sets of preferences manifest in different contexts, which from the standpoint of Becker's model would signify the same thing as the existence of multiple selves.<sup>106</sup> This multiple-selves problem leads to fragmentation of identity and the inability to develop a coherent set of Background capacities needed for proper development in self-understanding and understanding of God, i.e. for orthodoxy. Without space for identity in the economy, one cannot live in accordance with the identity received through justification, and therefore one cannot easily grow in sanctification. Finally, as previously noted, Becker's lack of a notion of commitment undermines social norming toward an intrinsic good as an

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example clearly attempts to extend a particular imaginary and a particular understanding of reasoning into the family. Becker has made similar efforts in many areas of life not traditionally interpreted in terms of economic theories of utility maximization. See: Gary S. Becker and Guity Nashat Becker, *The Economics of Life: From Baseball to Affirmative Action to Immigration, How Real-World Issues Affect our Everyday Life* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997). John Mueller rightly notes that Becker's theories cannot explain the real economic decisions facing a family. For example, men on average consume more food than do women. Assuming that costs of education and shelter are the same, this would mean that parents must derive higher utility from boys than from girls to explain their decision to continue to raise male children, at least if we are following Becker's approach. Mueller argues compellingly that such a conclusion is "circular and nonverifiable" – the explanation of parents as utility maximizers only explains such basic phenomena concerning the family if you also posit preferences for men. Neither preferences nor utility maximization is verifiable on its own, and each assumption relies on the other. Mueller, *Redeeming*, 166-7.

<sup>106</sup> Davis, *Theory of the Individual*, 55-62.

orthopraxis means of developing virtue as part of the Spirit's work of sanctification. As long as social norms are reduced to preferences understood in the context of utility maximization, the proposed policy response to problems will draw on incentives with the resulting crowding out and spillover effects.<sup>107</sup> Becker's economic theories, therefore, serve to illustrate the broad problems facing much of modern economic theory, where failure to attend to social imaginaries, identity, and norms undermines transformation in the dimensions of orthodoxy, orthopathy, and orthopraxis.

Despite the pessimism with which I treat Becker's work, I am not yet ready to give up on the market or on economics as a viable Christian discipline. To be sure, theological obstacles are formidable, but sometimes orthopraxis can be a viable starting point for returning to orthodoxy and orthopathy, just as orthopathy can be a basis for orthodoxy and orthopraxis.<sup>108</sup> In game theory, norms have resolved a number of intractable problems in games where purely self-interested individuals are unable to obtain an optimal outcome. For example, consider what is known as an agency game. In the game a principle invests \$1. An agent can choose to take the principle's \$1, at which time the game ends, or to also invest \$1. If the agent invests, both players receive their initial investment back plus an additional \$0.50. Operating under a rationality of pure profit maximization, the agent normatively should refuse to invest and make an additional \$1. However, game theorists have found that committing the principle and the agent to a longstanding relationship that discourages failure to participate through strong

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<sup>107</sup> So, for example, Becker proposes to use incentives or fines to tackle crime, immigration, and drug addiction. See Becker and Becker, *Economics of Life*, 142, 60-61, 150.

<sup>108</sup> Just as the work of God proceeds from the Father, to the Son, terminating in the Spirit, so our return to communion with the Father can reverse the standard pattern, beginning in the Spirit who through the Son restores our communion with the Father. I made this point previously in terms of the theology of James K. A. Smith in chapter 4.

professional norms can result in both principle and agent consistently investing such that each player can make a steady profit. Over time, the norms are internalized and action is changed. Rationality also changes, because the agents think in more collective terms than in terms of mere individual utility-maximization. Finally, we can deduce that the agent's experience of the game is re-personalized through a longstanding relationship.<sup>109</sup> In short, the agency game reveals that norms resulting in orthopraxic behavior have the potential to derail a heteropathic imaginary just as a heteropathic imaginary may have the potential to derail orthopraxis. Norms themselves may be a basis for transforming the economy so that it conforms to the work of God through common grace toward redemption.

For this reason, I choose to end my substantive analysis by pointing to the positive developments that have been made in business practice around the globe through movements I have classified as part of the redistributionist approach. The Focolare movement or the distributist-influenced Mondragon Corporation have already incorporated more orthopraxic business practices into their management, production, labor, and investment policies. Having granted this, however, I must immediately concede that the successes within these corporations are paltry in comparison with the larger changes that need to occur. Economic models defending the economic feasibility of such endeavors must be developed and deployed in the construction of markets that make the success of such businesses possible. The complex and time consuming process that would be needed to bring this change about could bring with it positive developments in orthopathy and orthodoxy, resulting in a market that does not impede the ability of Christians to live in communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, but which instead

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<sup>109</sup> Robert D. Cooter, "Law from Order: Economic Development and the Jurisprudence of Social Norms," in *A Not-So-Dismal Science: A Broader View of Economies and Societies*, eds. Mancur Olson and Satu Kähkönen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 230-34.

serves as a conduit for the common grace by which Father, Son, and Spirit are drawing the world to themselves for the redemption of humankind. I view defending the necessity of such a project as a vital need for contemporary theology and hope that the preceding arguments have begun to make the case for a theologically informed economics.

However, the actual construction of markets capable of being conformed to the work of common grace is something a theologian should never hope to be able to accomplish alone. So while theology may yet return to its post as queen of the sciences, a queen without subjects is nothing but a vestigial reminder of what might have been. Therefore only when Christian economists, politicians, and business executives make their own irreducible contributions to the development of an economy of common grace can regicide be prevented, and can there be any hope of a grace-filled market through which human beings may more fully know the God who eternally is Father, Son, and Spirit.

## CONCLUSION

That God is always working in and through the Church to redeem a people is theologically indisputable. The Church exists as the body of Christ, those who are being transformed into the likeness of the one who purchased them with his blood. The extent of the work of God in the world toward redemption, however, remains far more fragile. Though creation will find its end, its renewal, and its transfiguration in the eschatological completion of the transformation God is currently working within the Church, the extent to which creation is currently transfigured is by no means guaranteed.

I have endeavored to show that creation and redemption are not two disparate acts of God, but that creation itself is oriented toward a *telos* that is only obtainable through grace. In fact, human action within the created order is so radically dependent upon grace that we must understand God's transcendence in a non-contrastive way. Though God is transcendent to human actions, he is no less immanent to them so that all human actions must be understood as *in some sense* also the concurrent act of God. "In some sense" here plays a decisive role. Some human actions in the created order tend toward the supernatural *telos* of that order, in which case they must be understood as that form of grace whereby God uses all of creation to draw together a people for Himself. Reformed theologians speak of this as common grace. Other human actions are sinful and attempt to negate this grace. These actions are still permitted by God, but must be understood as primarily human, a discordant and irrational undoing of the divine work of creation.

Because God is triune, all divine actions must be seen as the undivided work of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Each action, however, can be properly appropriated to Father, Son, or Spirit as each work more clearly reveals one particular person. As *fons divinitatis*

the Father eternally generates a Son who is the perfect instantiation of the Father, a Son on whom the Spirit eternally rests to complete the love of the immanent Trinity. In the order of redemption we properly see the work of the economic Trinity *ad extra* taking a similar form. The Father's self-revelation in the Son is the source of faith in a believer who is then justified through the Son's redemptive death. Justification performatively conforms the believer to the image of Christ through the inseparable gift of the Spirit whose work in sanctification and glorification completes and perfects the transformative work of redemption. These acts must be seen as acts of special grace, devoid of any human meritorious contribution, arising solely from faith, and leading to communion with Father, Son, and Spirit who are each known distinctively in their respective redemptive acts.

We must remember that redemption is not severed from creation. Instead it perfects creation. So we also see within the order of creation a number of concurrent divine-human actions that are oriented through common grace toward redemption, and which can be appropriated to Father, Son, and Spirit insofar as they conform to the distinctive eternal relationship of each. Human beings experience the world within a particular social imaginary, a particular symbolic framework illuminating the social significance of any human action that makes a particular set of actions possible. Within an imaginary, a particular human identity determines for an individual the specific actions that can possibly be instantiated within a social world, and those actions are manifest as patterns of behavior brought to completion under the influence of social norms. Particularly when the human acts of experiencing, knowing, and doing underlying a social imaginary, identity, and norms are redemptively significant, contributing to the

sanctification of the Church in the order of Redemption, we must speak of God the Father, Son, and Spirit at work in the economy through an imaginary, identity, and norms respectively. When these created terms undermine redemptively significant transformation in the dimensions of orthodoxy, orthopathy, and orthopraxis made possible through special grace, they must be seen as sinful efforts to quench the Spirit's fire.

I have argued that both common grace and sin are possible within a market economy in the areas of social imaginary, identity, and norms. Though a market can be constructed in many ways, many contemporary economic models contribute to an imaginary that depersonalizes and objectifies human persons in the economy. As a result of this depersonalization, Background capacities for relating to others as persons wither, thereby diminishing our ability to have communion through personal relationships with the three divine persons. This failure in orthopathy can undermine an orthodox understanding of human identity through an instrumentalist logic deployed throughout the economy that undermines the unique and valuable nature of all humans who bear the image of God. Even worse, modern economic models' failure to adequately treat the notion of identity results in market constructions that contribute to identity fragmentation or to loss of identity. In such circumstances it becomes difficult for Christians in the economy to live into the adopted identity of Christ's sonship received in justification, a fact that undermines the sanctification that flows from justification. When instrumental logic emphasizing self-interested utility maximization is understood as a norm, it can derail patterns of action in the world that pursue the trajectory of other-regarding action initiated by Christ and sustained by the Holy Spirit. Markets constructed under the



assumption that human beings are motivated only by extrinsic incentives undermine intrinsic motivations fundamental to the development of virtue, resisting the work of the Spirit in sanctification.

Though problems abound, this need not mean that the market cannot be a conduit of God's common grace contributing to the sanctification of the Church. I have argued that many of the strongest critics of capitalism have failed to attend to the diverse ways in which a market can be constructed. In fact, Christians within the redistributionist approach have already engaged in markets in a manner more likely to foster sanctification than is normally the case in the modern economy. Furthermore, though the market is often depersonalizing and objectifying, market structures themselves can foster interpersonal interaction that results in genuine community. Efforts to develop relational goods within market exchanges, reduction in the use of incentives, and attention to which market structures contribute to the formation of virtue could all result in a market system that is in greater conformity with the work of God in redemption. There has been far too little intentional research regarding these questions to yet determine the extent to which a market can be constructed within which an economic agent can be more easily aware of the workings of the Father, Son, and Spirit within the created order, and within which these divine workings are less frequently resisted, so it is not wise to pursue the course of the legitimizing approach, even if it was possible to clearly endorse an economy as the best Christian alternative, which is unlikely.

At this point I must acknowledge what may be a glaring omission in the eyes of some of my readers. I have responded to critics of capitalism who fail to attend to the potentials latent within the market and who view the market as necessarily leading to the

malformation of human persons, but I have barely mentioned objections to capitalism that treat the market as fundamentally oppressive, unjust, or idolatrous, the sorts of objections often made in liberation theology. This omission is by design and for two reasons. First, I sought to attend to a prior question to that of injustice, namely, what factors of a market economy contribute to our formation as human subjects such that gross economic oppression or injustice could be possible in the first place?<sup>1</sup> When the structure of the market is depersonalizing, emphasizes instrumental logic, or diminishes intrinsic motivation, any effort to pursue justice will be undermined. When the market resists the formation of the Background capacities necessary to avoid what is commonly called the idolatry of the market, or when the development of the virtues needed to pursue justice are undermined through a refusal of the goods internal to a practice, justice will not be found. Second, while I have outlined the salient features of a theology addressing the work of God in the economy, I have for the most part avoided analyzing particular policies, market structures, or institutions. Eventually analysis will need to turn to these questions, but there was enough to tend to in this volume to prohibit my considering particular questions of justice at present.

Another glaring omission may have bothered some of my readers: Where is the Church? In the theology here presented, I have emphasized how creation is oriented toward redemption, and therefore how common grace is oriented toward the benefit of the Church. What has been conspicuously absent is any account of how the Church is also for the world. This has rightly been a far more important theme in much systematic theology. Because the community that is the Church is the community that is united with

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<sup>1</sup> Here I have no particular injustices in mind. The question as to how just or unjust the current market economy is must be tabled for a later project.

a God who is a God for the world, the Church is fundamentally for the world.<sup>2</sup> I have merely intended to highlight the corresponding truth that because the fact that God is for the world is most clearly evident in the Church in which God is drawing persons within the world to himself, and because this Church within the world is fundamentally for God by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can know that the world is also by grace designed to be fundamentally for the Church and through the Church for God. This is the return to God by which personal relationships are mutual, and communion is complete. My theology has therefore emphasized common grace and the need to orient creation in general and the economy in particular toward the sanctification of the Church and toward the glory of God. A complete theology of the economy – and I make no claim to have here presented a complete theology – would also attend to the manner in which the Church is for the world as the body that bears witness to world that it is created by and for God.

Though I cannot sufficiently develop the connection between ecclesiology and economy, special grace and the world here, I can at least offer some preliminary remarks that may help illuminate the direction such a theology might take. The Church has the responsibility to bear witness through the power of the Spirit to the salvation available in Christ according to the Father's eternal plan. Whereas a theology of common grace explores the subtle ways in which society as a whole can contribute toward the believer's sanctification, a theology of special grace must explore how the Church proclaims the word to society as the means by which the world can be transformed through special grace so as to partake in the salvation that makes sanctification possible in the first place. A theology of common grace highlights the way that salvation is corporate, pointing out

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<sup>2</sup> Barth, *Dogmatics* IV.3.2, 763.

how a human person is shaped by society and economy in ways that are redemptively significant. Personal salvation is never so personal as to unfold in isolation from one's community and social context. A theology of special grace highlighting the Church's role in society recognizes that the Church is also a fundamentally and irreducibly communal reality, but special grace highlights the personal nature of salvation. Each human being when confronted with the Word stands before a broad and a narrow gate (Matt. 7:13-14) given a personal choice to be for or against God.

When the Church places the decision to be for or against God before the world, the Church provides the occasion for God's grace to lead to faith, conversion, and transformation. Such conversion and transformation is the primary means by which the world can change, and so proclamation by the Church and intentional effort within the economic sphere offers the best hope of bringing about the changes needed to properly orient the created order toward the order of redemption. This must be made clear lest a certain Gnosticism creep into a theology of the economy that would present salvation as an escape from captivity in sinful structures – in this case in a sinful economy that lacks orthopathy in its social imaginary, orthodoxy in its notion of identity, and orthopraxis in the actions perpetuated by norms. Yes, the economy can resist the transformation happening through sanctification, and yes, the economy can be a site of God's common grace, but no, the transformation found through salvation is not primarily about rightly constructing imagined spaces like the market. For this reason, a theology of common grace must always be balanced by ecclesiology.

What, then, is the role of the Church in the economy? If my arguments are persuasive, how should the Church respond to what I have argued? Have I provided a

recipe for a Constantinian drive to seize state power as a basis for constructing a market? While there is no doubt that some work must be done through political channels, it is not clear at all that the primary means of bringing about change must lie through the use of statecraft. The Church's main objective must always remain the task of simply being the Church, a city on a hill, a lamp not hidden under a bushel (Matt. 5:14-16). When Christians make a move to change the economy so that it yields to the work of God in the created order, this task will always be secondary to the task of faithful witness to the gospel. And when such transformation is pursued, it can easily be pursued in a microeconomic context, as businesses pursue new ends, individual markets are constructed along different lines, and consumers, workers, and investors strive toward new practices rooted in their identity in Christ, practices that will contribute to the transformation of prevailing social imaginaries that disenchant the world and undermine communion with the triune God.

Communion with the triune God is the end goal of all of creation. Within the Church, this means that God is working to bring a redeemed people into ever-closer fellowship with Father, Son, and Spirit. God's work within the world is no less oriented toward such communion, such that the work of the economic Trinity in redemption will eschatologically converge with the economic work of human beings. This convergence is a horizon toward which we must continually strive, though as horizon we cannot hope for a full realization of such unity until the final consummation of creation is completed in the advent of Christ's return and reign. Until that final day, may we have the courage to proclaim to the world that it is oriented toward a transcendent goal, toward redemption, toward communion with God, and through this proclamation may the economic work of

Father, Son, and Spirit by grace include the economic work of human beings. May there be communion with the economic Trinity in the economy of humankind.



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